

THE

VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ October 2016



TEAMWORK

Locals Find Success Sharing Leadership Responsibilities

**NSEA at Boston, 1910:
No Parasol Needed**

**At Hearing, NSEA
Defends EHA Plan**

NSEA Comes to Defense of EHA Plan

Legislative Hearing Investigates Moving Teachers to State Coverage

A legislative interim hearing on the health care plan that serves more than 80,000 members of Nebraska's public education family was a learning moment for Nebraska legislators.

The Legislature's Education Committee listened as a parade of educators and others voiced support for the Educator's Health Alliance plan. No one testified in support of North Platte Sen. Mike Groene's LR586 study to determine the viability of pulling all Nebraska public school employees out of the EHA plan and providing those employees with coverage through the State of Nebraska plan.

Groene introduced LR586 with an intent to "examine the effects, fiscal impact, and potential cost savings of transferring public school employees from the system of district-based health insurance plans to the Nebraska State Insurance program." Among issues studied were:

- The fiscal impact if the state were to take on administrative costs and school districts/employees paid premium costs.
- The option of including school district health insurance costs within the state aid formula.

Those who testified, however, characterized the EHA plan as effective, efficient and well-managed.

NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen reviewed the history of the statewide plan NSEA formed in 1967, and told senators that the EHA Board's mission has always been to "obtain high-quality health insurance coverage at reasonable prices for employees of Nebraska's public school districts."

The current plan, he reminded senators, is a collaboration between teachers, school administrators and school boards.

"It has become a national model of cooperation and remains unique in its structure, statewide scope and attractive costs," he said.

The plan utilizes consultants and has no property, no employees. The board – six teacher members, three administrators and three school board representatives – actively monitor the plan and continually consider the costs to all parties, including taxpayers. Christiansen said the plan provides health care coverage at a reasonable cost and is considered a "best value" for virtually every school district in Nebraska, for several colleges and for many Educational Service Units.

"I ask that you not 'fix' a successful plan that has become a nation-

al model and has served Nebraska educators for decades," he said.

Actuary Kevin Dolsky advises the EHA Board of Directors on the health care plan's management. Dolsky told senators that in each of the last 10 years, the premium rate increases under the EHA plan have been under 10 percent. For the past six years, the annual increase has averaged just over three percent.

"That's just extraordinary in this industry," he said.

Dolsky also said the EHA's consistency rate is "extraordinary." Consistency rate, he said, is an industry term that measures how many customers stay with a health care plan.

"Ninety percent is good, and 95 percent would be excellent," said Dolsky. "But the EHA has 99 percent. That is just extraordinary."

Educators
Health
Alliance

An actuarial analysis shows that if the state and school plans were combined, rates for those in the school plan would go up.

"The evidence is that costs will go up if the schools go into the state plan," Dolsky said.

The EHA plan earned further accolades from Sandy Rosenboom, business manager for the Crete Public Schools. She lauded the EHA wellness plan that is part of the strategy to keep premium costs in line.

"To move to a state plan would be a major setback to the wellness work we have done to this point," said Rosenboom.

Also favoring the EHA program was Seward State Sen. Mark Kolterman, an insurance professional by trade. As a member of the Seward Board of Education, Kolterman served on the EHA Board of Directors several years ago. He said that service showed that the EHA plan is "on solid ground, the service is second to none, and the internal workings of the plan is second to none."

It is also important, said Kolterman, that the EHA health care carrier, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, is located in Nebraska.

"That is an important consideration," he said.

Rate increases with the EHA plan have been minimal.

"Last week, I had to break the news to a small group that they face a 27 percent increase" in premiums, said Kolterman.

Groene said he had hoped to tie health care costs into the state aid formula, and noted that health care is a major cost.

"It's amazing that I see a Sutherland teacher with a family of four earning \$30,000 a year and (district) health care costs are \$21,000 a year," he said.

"EHA has done an amazing job, with the union sitting down with management," Groene said.



Cover Story:

The Columbus Education Association is trying something a little different: three-co-presidents. From left are CEA Co-Presidents John Petersen, Diane Garner and Marc Baue. South Sioux City has a five-member leadership team on board. For details, turn to

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NSEA
THE VOICE

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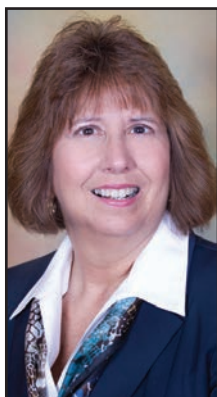
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Lessons from Afar



**NSEA President
Nancy Fulton**

Hei! En puhu suomea.

That essential phrase — *Hello! I can't speak Finnish* — was an essential phrase from one of the world's hardest languages to speak, read and write as I joined other state association presidents last month on a study tour of Finland's public school system.

Finland has been attracting attention lately by ranking at the top of global surveys due to a universal health care system, strong environmental sustainability efforts, economic vitality, and, most of all, a very strong system of public education.

Point in case: my inability to speak Finnish was not a problem. Every Finn speaks English — with varying levels of proficiency — because English is one of the three languages taught in Finland's public schools.

Since Finland emerged in the early part of this century as the top-scoring country in educational achievement (as measured by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), researchers and policymakers from across the globe have been visiting the country and analyzing what has been done to make Finland so successful. The OECD ranking is based on the results of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests which rank school systems worldwide every three years.

Finland's top-of-the-world standing has not always been the case. In the past, only about 1 of 10 adults had completed more than the nine years of basic education. About forty years ago, Finland decided to create an equitable education system, borrowing and implementing many American ideas and methods.

No Private, Charter Schools

The Finns are deservedly proud of the fact that schools are virtually equal in all regards across the country, whether they are located in affluent or poverty stricken areas, in the most urban areas of Helsinki, or the furthest areas of Lapland. Although Finnish children do not start primary school until age seven, the government provides early childhood education and childcare called Kindergarten for children 9 months to age 5, with an option pre-school year at age 6. The minimum level of education for a teacher in that setting is a bachelor's degree.

The vast majority of Finns are educated in the comprehensive public school system because there are no private or charter schools in Finland.

Every child attends a nine-year basic education school, with six years in primary school and three years in lower secondary schools (junior high). This is followed by a three-year upper secondary education separated into two tracks: general upper secondary and vocational school, with teachers in that track owning a master's degree or more. They follow a national framework of curriculum objectives, but within the framework teachers have autonomy to teach as they wish. Just this year, a new curriculum called phenomenon-based learning was introduced. In this mode, a classroom observes a real-life phenomenon and analyzes it through an interdisciplinary approach, a process that is similar to project-based learning.

In three days, our group was able to visit two basic education schools, a secondary school, two teacher training schools, the University of Helsinki, the Finnish National Board of Education, and the Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö (OAJ), the education trade union. We visited classrooms, talked with students, teachers and principals, learned about the quite rigorous teacher training programs, and were immersed into the Finnish culture.

Trust, Autonomy

Finnish schools seem to succeed so well largely due to the trust and relative autonomy given to educators and administrators. Teachers earn close to the national average salary and are highly respected, and with good reason: Becoming a teacher in Finland is a very competitive process. Teacher training schools are very rigorous, and fewer than 10 percent of applicants are accepted. Upon graduation, with a minimum of a master's degree and without any student debt, teachers have high social prestige, comparable to lawyers and doctors. They enjoy professional autonomy in their classes and professional respect and trust from the general public. Finnish teachers teach for 190 days a year, instructing an average of 24 hours a week, with the remaining work time spent in preparation, collaboration or research.

No single aspect explains Finland's outstanding educational performance. Most observers and researchers agree that the excellent teachers and the trust that citizens put in their teachers play a critical role.

It has taken years for the Finns, borrowing the best educational practices from other countries, to attain excellence. Perhaps today there are lessons *we* can learn from *them*.

“
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'Sueann' Transplanted to a New Home

NSEA Colleagues: 'Working Together Part of God's Plan'

Those closely involved with NSEA have for years spoken with conviction about what it means to belong to "the NSEA family."

For nearly as long, NSEA associate staff for Government Relations Cathy Schapmann has lived with low-functioning kidneys, the result of a hereditary condition.

Last October Schapmann emailed work colleagues alerting them that she had started the journey toward a transplant. Extensive testing led to her placement on the national transplant list in February. She did not dream that the donor kidney would come from someone within the NSEA family, much less her very good friend and co-worker Patty Schroer.

Today, 12 weeks after surgery, both Schapmann and Schroer are healing, doing well and are back at work. Schapmann's post-operative reports have been stellar, Schroer has been able to resume walking the family dog (more on that later) and the donated kidney has been christened "Sueann."

"We didn't want to say 'it' when we talked about the kidney," said Schapmann.

A former colleague told Schapmann it was customary to give a transplanted organ a name. "Sueann" is a combination of Schapmann's and Schroer's middle names.

Kindness, Compassion

Schapmann began working as a legal secretary for a Lincoln law firm in 1984. A year later, Schroer was hired and they became fast friends. In 1991, Schroer took a job at NSEA. Two years later, Schapmann followed Schroer to NSEA.

Schroer has been administrative assistant to NSEA's associate executive director

for 24 years. Schapmann has handled associate staff duties for NSEA's Government Relations program for 21 years.

"Patty and Cathy really epitomize what we mean when we say 'the NSEA family,'" said NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen. "Kindness and compassion of this depth are rarities in today's world."

Big Dog?

Schapmann knew transplant day would come. Her mother had a transplant in 2003. A brother received a new kidney two years ago.

By October of 2015, tests indicated Schapmann's kidneys were working at a combined 17 percent of capacity. Her email to colleagues was dispatched and she began to look toward testing that would begin the matchmaking process.

Meanwhile, from the note that Schapmann shared, Schroer realized she was the right blood type. "I read that a new, live kidney adds five years to the life expectancy," said Schroer. "I thought I'd give it a try."

Schroer submitted to testing, and initial work found that she matched on five of eight markers. There were multiple tests and lab visits, and some testing went far beyond bloodwork. Schroer spent one day talking to a psychologist, a social worker and others to determine the non-medical aspects of her suitability as a donor. They asked her who would be at home with her after surgery, whether she had upcoming stress in her life, such as a job change or move. They asked about her exercise regimen, and she told them she walked the family dog every day. "How big is the dog?" was the response.



Sharing Sueann: Friends and co-workers Patty Schroer, left, and Cathy Schapmann have recovered well after after Schroer donated a kidney to Schapmann this summer.

"They are very, very good at the Nebraska Medical Center," she said. "We're very blessed. They know what they are doing."

Schroer found herself becoming more comfortable with her decision.

"The more the process moved along, the fewer concerns I had," said Schroer. "It's a lot more common than most people think."

'I Cried'

The call for "go" came in late June. Schapmann and husband Ray were on the road to Colorado to visit their son.

"I cried, of course," Schapmann said.

Schroer was at work when she got the call. "I knew it was going to happen, and I thought 'here we go!'" she said.

There were no second thoughts and Sueann was transferred on July 6. Within seven weeks, Schapmann and Schroer began to return to work for short stints. By mid-September, both were right back where they started 32 years ago: working together.

"This must be why we started working together. God had a plan. We just didn't know it," Schroer said.

Help Meet the Need

Nearly 120,000 American men, women and children are awaiting an organ transplant. You can learn more about the process, or sign up to become a donor, at:

organdonor.gov/index.html

Search for Christiansen Successor Now Under Way

The NSEA Board of Directors has begun the search for an executive director to succeed Craig R. Christiansen, who has announced he will leave the position on Feb. 28, 2017, and return to teaching.

"We are looking for a well-rounded, individual trained in education and possessing appropriate skills for managing NSEA's day-to-day operations," said President Nancy Fulton.

The executive director is responsible

to NSEA's Board of Directors and advises them in their governance role. He or she also leads development of the annual budget and manages finances within budget guidelines and accepted fiscal practice.

A successful applicant will also manage staff according to the NSEA-NSA Negotiated Agreement and NSEA policies, and will direct staff in performance of their duties. A detailed job description is available at:

nsea.org/job-posting-nsea-

executive-directortreasurer

Applicants must offer a letter of application which shows how career accomplishments prepared the candidate to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by this position; an up-to-date resume; and three letters of reference. Applications are due no later than Oct. 28, and should be sent to Fulton at, 605 South 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508, or emailed to:

nancy.fulton@nsea.org

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Joanna Utecht
Science/Math Education, MS Ed
University of Nebraska at Kearney

Three is No Crowd at the Top

Columbus, S. Sioux Finding Success with Leadership Teams

The adage that two heads are better than one may no longer hold true.

Members of the Columbus Education Association believe that three co-presidents will work. In South Sioux City, educators have found that five heads are best.

It is not uncommon for local education associations to elect co-presidents to share the workload and duties that come with leadership. Columbus and South Sioux City Association members, however, have spread the workload more than most.

The Columbus triumvirate has been on the job just a little more than two months, while the South Sioux model with five co-presidents has been on the job for several years. In fact, South Sioux City's experiment was the inspiration for the leadership expansion in Columbus, said CEA Co-President Marc Baue. Former Columbus President Kay Strecker attended an NSEA meeting in the summer of 2015 where she talked with South Sioux City leaders.

Columbus leaders discussed the idea, and membership agreed that a shared leadership experiment would be a good approach. Members elected Baue, a high school language arts teacher; John Petersen, a middle school physical education teacher and coach; and Diane Garner, a retired teacher who is now an elementary education support professional (ESP) serving on the NSEA Board of Directors. All are past CEA presidents.

'So Much to Do'

Baue acknowledges that workload is one reason for the leadership expansion. "It's sometimes been difficult to get people to step up to the job in the past," he said.

Garner agrees. "You just get so burnt out," she said. "It seems like you're always meeting or planning for meetings – and there is so much more a president has to do."

It's early in the process at Columbus. But the co-presidents are each passionate about their profession, their association and about making this model work. Although a change to CEA bylaws facilitated the co-presidency, day-to-day operations and responsibilities are evolving as the team moves through the year.

"A lot of that is happening naturally," said Baue. "We all just gravitate to our strengths."

Baue said Petersen's strength is "building relationships. Diane is passionate



Gavel-to-Gavel-to-Gavel: Serving as Columbus Education Association Co-Presidents this year are Diane Garner, Marc Baue and John Petersen.

about ESPs and about members being part of a larger organization – at the state and national levels."

Garner said Baue "is very well-spoken. He's our wordsmith."

So far, they've found that scheduling a meeting with the three of them has been difficult – "that's why we e-mail a lot," said Garner. And as a timeclock-bound ESP, Garner has less flexibility than Baue and Petersen. "There is not a lot of leeway for me to get out and about" during the school day, she said.

Start the Groundwork

Aside from easing the workload, there are other strengths to the CEA plan. Petersen said one president is at an elementary school, one at the middle school and one at the high school

"With a representative at each level, it

makes it easier for members to reach one of the leadership team and talk to them," he said.

In addition, Treasurer Sandy Seckel, Secretary Jane Dodson and Membership Chair Strecker are stationed at different elementary schools.

The three-leader approach may also assist with building relationships between the CEA and the board and administration.

"We have a good relationship, a clear channel of communication and that is largely due to John's efforts," said Baue.

Petersen believes that having leaders at all three building levels may make discussions with administration easier – joint meetings with administrators and CEA leaders will mean someone in the room will represent and be knowledgeable about issues at all three levels.

"It's a good way to start the groundwork

for that relationship,” he said.

South Sioux City Education Association leaders are pleased with their approach, which provides five members of the leadership team. The team includes one secondary (middle school) member, three elementary teachers and an ESP with central office administrative secretary Lori Krahmer.

Middle school vocal music teacher Suzanne Dailey is NSEA’s point-of-contact person this year. But all other leadership duties are shared with Krahmer, elementary art teacher Joan Manley, and elementary teachers Erica Bowman and Jim Hubbard. While five may sound awkward, Dailey assures that it is not. Regular communications through emails and text messages – and reaching consensus – is the key.

“We discuss everything before we take things to the membership or administration,” she said. “It may sound cumbersome, but it is not.”

Manley said the five are very like-minded, with the best interests of the Association at heart.

“The biggest advantage is that we can work as a team, utilizing everyone’s individual strengths. No one person is responsible for it all,” she said.

However, she said each of the five have “naturally fallen into what we are good at based on our strengths.” For instance, Manley said Dailey “is excellent at bookkeeping and money management” and is a past



Bowman



Dailey



Hubbard



Krahmer



Manley

SSCEA treasurer. Bowman has community connections and is a great planner, and Hubbard is the optimistic outlook member of the team. Krahmer, the newest member on the team, did a great job organizing a meeting for non-certified staff, said Manley.

The five do share one strength: “All of us are outspoken and willing to talk to groups, administrators and colleagues,” said Manley.

Fluid, Conversational

At a regular monthly meeting with administrators, Dailey said the conversation turns to the leader who can best address the situation. “It becomes much more of a conversation than an adversarial situation,” she said.

The same is true when leadership meets with building reps or members. “It really is fluid and has taken on a conversational atmosphere with our building reps,” said Dailey.

Building reps, and members in general, also have more leadership representatives to approach.

“If a member doesn’t feel comfortable talking with me, they can go to someone they feel more comfortable talking to,” said Dailey.

She advised other locals to consider the move to a leadership team.

“This has been so successful for us, it really is worth looking into,” said Dailey. “I don’t see South Sioux City going back to the typical officer hierarchy any time soon.”



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Delegate Assembly Veterans: This contingent represented the Kearney Education Association well at NSEA's 2016 Delegate Assembly. From left are Wendy Deyo, Chris Weis, Amy Burns, Paloma Mena-Werth and Amber Lewis.

Prepare Now for a Memorable DA!

One-of-a-Kind Delegate Assembly to Launch NSEA's Second 150 Years

The April 2017 annual meeting of the Nebraska State Education Association will be unlike any of the previous 155 such gatherings.

First, the weekend will kick off on Friday evening with an invitation-to-delegates-and-dignitaries-only gala that will celebrate NSEA's sesquicentennial.

Second, delegates will follow on Saturday with a full day of business, including election of three new members to the Association's four-member Executive Committee.

Because the weekend will be busy, and because seating is limited at Friday's gala, local associations are both encouraged and urged to elect delegates by early March 2017. Only delegate names submitted to NSEA by Friday, March 24, will receive invitations to the Friday night gala.

"This is going to be memorable," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "NSEA has a long and storied history, and we plan to celebrate accordingly."

NSEA's first meeting was held as the Nebraska State Teachers Association in Brownville on Oct. 16, 1867, just months after Nebraska gained statehood. Members have met every year since – and sometimes twice, making the 2017 event the Association's 156th Delegate Assembly. NSEA is the state's oldest professional association.

A Memorable Event

The 2017 Delegate Assembly is scheduled for Friday and Sat-

urday, April 21-22.

The Friday gala celebration is scheduled for Lincoln Station, the former city train station Lincoln's Haymarket area that now serves as a site for weddings and conventions. Delegates registered by the

March 24 deadline will enjoy a plated dinner, a guest speaker and other sesquicentennial-worthy ceremonies. Delegates will be allowed to purchase an additional ticket to the gala. Watch The Voice for the cost and other details.

Action on Saturday morning at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel will most certainly include campaign speeches by those seeking election to three-year-terms as NSEA president, vice president, and Nebraska NEA director. Elections for those posts will be held later Saturday morning.

Delegates will also discuss and debate changes to Bylaws, any proposed new Resolutions or New Business Items. Dues for 2017-18 will also be set by Delegates on Saturday. It will be busy, but fulfilling.

Said one delegate in the blind evaluations turned back to NSEA after the 2016 event: "It was definitely an eye-opener and the speakers were top-notch. I actually felt appreciated again as a teacher."

To make your interest in serving as a delegate known, contact your local association president, your local association building or faculty representative, or your NSEA organizational specialist at 1-800-742-0047.



Recognize a Colleague's Excellence with an NSEA Award

Now is a good time to begin discussing who you or your local association might nominate for one of the honors to be awarded at NSEA's Delegate Assembly next April.

Any NSEA member may nominate a member teacher, ESP or deserving group. Mailed nominations must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 17, 2017, and should be sent to NSEA Awards, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Nominations may also be submitted online, with required supporting material mailed to the NSEA. Online nomination forms are found under the 'Call for Nominations' link at:

www.nsea.org

The 2017 Delegate Assembly will be held at Lincoln's Cornhusker Marriott Hotel April 21-22. NSEA members are eligible for:

- **NSEA Rookie of the Year:** To honor a first-year teacher who excelled in the 2015-16 school year.
- **Award for Teaching Excellence:** Honors a teacher who has excelled in the classroom over a period of time.

- **Education Support Professional of the Year:** Honors an ESP who has excelled in his or her job.

Finalists will be notified in March, with winners revealed at Delegate Assembly. Recipients receive a \$250 cash award.

NSEA members are also eligible for:

- **The Great Plains Milestone Award:** Honors an individual/group for promoting human and civil rights.

- **Community Service:** Honors NSEA members and/or local associations involved in volunteer work outside of classroom hours.

- **Local Public Relations:** Honors local associations for outstanding communication within the association.

Also to be presented:

- **Friend of Education:** Honors an individual or organization that has made a statewide contribution to education.

- **Media:** Recognizes a newspaper, television or radio station for coverage of education issues and promotion of public education.

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NSEA at Boston, 1913: Nebraska has always been well-represented at the annual meetings of the National Education Association. At left are some of the 101 Nebraska members who toured Boston during the 1913 convention. Below, some in the Nebraska delegation took time for a swim at Revere Beach, just north of Boston. The photos are courtesy of Dwight Ganzel, Lincoln, whose father Chester was a delegate.

NSEA at Boston, 1910

Some Delegates ‘Took no Parasol’

This is one of a series marking the 150th anniversary of NSEA’s 1867 founding in October 2017.

NSEA members have long been ardent in their support and activism on behalf of education.

For example, in 1910, the Nebraska delegation to the annual meeting of the National Education Association at Boston numbered 101. The report on that excursion took 52 pages of the *1910 Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Nebraska*.

The report, along with the photos shown here, were delivered to NSEA by Betty Stukenholtz of Nebraska City, who, among other things, has turned the one-room Harmony School near Nebraska City she attended as a child into a museum. Stukenholtz knows Dwight Ganzel of Lincoln, whose father Chester was on the 1910 trip. Ganzel provided the report and photos.

State Superintendent of Schools E.C. Bishop authored the report.

Delegates traveled by train from Lincoln, to Chicago then Detroit, crossed into Canada and then east to Niagara Falls. There they boarded a steamer to head down the St. Lawrence River to Montreal and a day of sightseeing. From there a train ride through Vermont and New Hampshire took them to Boston. Here are highlights from the report, entitled *Nebraska Boston N.E.A. Excursion*:

Four members from Osceola decided that two things were very important: First, the amount of cash needed; second, what to take with them. These four members decided \$125 would cover all necessary expenditures and it did. Next, they decided the suitcase should be as light as possible; therefore they took no extra dress, and left at home everything they thought they could possibly do without. They took no parasol.

Tuesday, June 28: The

Nebraska party left Lincoln at 4:30 p.m. Three coaches were reserved to accommodate the members who left Lincoln and Nebraska City.

Monday, July 4: In the morning was a parade of soldiers, Marines, bands, floats and school children, which were reviewed by President Taft and his party. The meetings of NEA were held in various places in the city but President Taft was the main speaker of the day at a general meeting which was held at the Stadium.

Tuesday, July 5: In the morning they started out and after some time realized they were lost. A man offered to show them the way. He took them past the Old North Church and Faneuil Hall.

Friday, July 8: Visited Providence, RI, where Rhode Island teachers had just had a pension law passed. The report said “the teachers have to serve 35 years before they are eligible to the pension.”

Wednesday, July 6: 9 a.m. started on their trip to Lexington and Concord. That evening they toured the Christian Science Church. After visiting the church, they went to the Brunswick Hotel where the Teachers’ Club held a reception for Mrs. Young, who later was elected president of NEA. Later they heard the Boston Symphony.

Thursday, July 7: Morning was spent at the Museum of Fine Arts. In the evening there was a reception for the Nebraska delegation.

Saturday, July 9: At noon boarded a steamer to Bedloe’s Island in New York harbor. After an hour at the Statue of Liberty returned to New York by ferry. Boarded street cars and rode several miles to Broadway and 36th Street.

Monday, July 11: Went to some of the big stores, then to Central Park. At 4 p.m. took a trolley trip around the city.

Tuesday, July 12: In the morning toured Metropolitan Art Museum. At 3 p.m. bade farewell to New York. From New York to Norfolk took the “Princess Anne” steamer. They gathered on deck and it was

suggested they sing. They spent 2 hours singing favorite school songs, hymns, and the Nebraska Corn Song.

From Norfolk, the delegation took a trolley to Virginia Beach, where some “went in bathing.” They took another steamer to Washington, D.C., and spent time there and in Alexandria, VA, before heading to Pittsburgh, Chicago and then home.



GAME TIME

There are just a few weeks before the November 8 General Election, and this will be an important vote.

Bipartisan panels of NSEA members have held face-to-face interviews with candidates about education issues and offer the recommendations shown here. Some candidates did not respond to NSEA's request for an interview, and that is designated by 'NR' for no response.

On the ever-critical question of whether a candidate is with NSEA in opposition to the use of public funds for private and corporate schools, NSEA found responses from many opposition candidates on the Nebraska Family Alliance website.

Regardless of your political affiliation, please set a good example for your students – register to vote, and follow that registration by voting for the candidates of your choice!

So ask your candidates where they stand on *public* education and how they will support students and teachers in that arena. Then, when it comes time to vote, please give consideration to NSEA's recommended candidates for Legislature and the State Board of Education:

Nebraska Legislature

- Dist. 1:** Sen. Dan Watermeier, Syracuse
- Dist. 3:** Carol Blood, Bellevue, Papillion
- Dist. 5:** Mike McDonnell, Omaha
- Dist. 7:** John Synowiecki, Omaha
- Dist. 9:** Sen. Sara Howard, Omaha
- Dist. 13:** Justin Wayne, Omaha
- Dist. 15:** Lynne Walz, Fremont
- Dist. 17:** Ardel Bengtson, S. Sioux City
- Dist. 19:** Sen. Jim Scheer, Norfolk
- Dist. 21:** Larry Scherer, Malcolm
- Dist. 23:** Sen. Jerry Johnson, Wahoo
- Dist. 25:** Jim Gordon, Lincoln
- Dist. 27:** Anna Wishart, Lincoln
- Dist. 29:** Sen. Kate Bolz, Lincoln
- Dist. 31:** Sen. Rick Kolowski, Millard
- Dist. 33:** Sen. Les Seiler, Hastings
- Dist. 35:** Dan Quick, Grand Island
- Dist. 37:** Bob Lammers, Kearney
- Dist. 39:** Bill Armbrust: Elkhorn, Omaha
- Dist. 41:** Tom Briese, Albion
- Dist. 43:** Sen. Al Davis, Hyannis
- Dist. 45:** Sen. Sue Crawford, Bellevue
- Dist. 47:** Karl Elmshaeuser, Ogallala

State Board of Education

- Dist. 1:** Patricia Koch Johns, Lincoln
- Dist. 2:** Lisa Fricke: Bellevue, Millard, Papillion
- Dist. 3:** Rachel Wise: Oakland, Northeast Nebraska



Candidia

11.8.16

Legislative District	Location	Candidate	Public School Funding is Adequate	SUPP Profit Sc
03	Bellevue, Papillion Area	CAROL BLOOD	No	
		Tommy Garrett	No	
15	Dodge County	LYNNE WALZ	No	
		David Schnoor	Yes	
17	Dakota, Wayne, Thurston Counties	ARDEL BENGTON	No	
		Joni Albrecht	NR	
21	NW Lincoln, Lancaster County	LARRY SCHERER	No	
		Mike Hilgers	NR	
23	Saunders, Butler, Colfax Counties	SEN. JERRY JOHNSON	Yes	
		Bruce Bostleman	NR	
25	East Lincoln, & Lancaster County	JIM GORDON	No	
		Sue Geist	NR	
31	Millard & Western, Douglas County	SEN. RICK KOLOWSKI	No	
		Ian Swanson	NR	
33	Adams County, Western Hall County	SEN. LES SEILER	No	
		Steve Halloran	NR	
35	Grand Island	DAN QUICK	No	
		Gregg Neuhaus	NR	
37	Southeastern Buffalo County	BOB LAMMERS	No	
		John Lowe, Sr.	Yes	
43	Northwest Nebraska	SEN. AL DAVIS	No	
		Tom Brewer	NR	
45	Eastern Third of Sarpy County	SEN. SUE CRAWFORD	No	
		Michael Cook	NR	

State Roster

10
0

SUPPORTS For /Charter Schools	SUPPORTS Collective Bargaining	OPPOSES Public Funds for Private Schools	SUPPORTS Creation of Education Trust Fund	SUPPORTS Fair Dismissal Hearings	Quotes:
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	"I believe that we devalue our children when we devalue our teachers."
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	"Investing in public schools is far more cost effective than dealing with the consequences."
No	No	Yes	NR	No	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
Yes	No	No	No	Yes	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	No	NR	NR	
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	



GAME CHANGERS:

- OCT. 21:** MAIL-IN VOTER REGISTRATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED; VOTER REGISTRATION CLOSES AT MOTOR VEHICLE OFFICES AND STATE AGENCIES.
- OCT. 28:** IN-PERSON VOTER REGISTRATION AT COUNTY ELECTION OFFICES ENDS AT 6 P.M.. THIS INCLUDES CHANGES SUCH AS UPDATING AN ADDRESS.
- NOV. 2:** REGISTERED VOTERS CAN MAKE REQUESTS UNTIL 4 PM. FOR EARLY VOTING BALLOTS TO BE MAILED.
- NOV. 7** DEADLINE FOR IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING AT COUNTY ELECTION OFFICES
- NOV. 8** ELECTION DAY! ALL EARLY VOTING BALLOTS TO BE RETURNED TO THE COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE WHEN POLLS CLOSE.

26*

***The number of GRADUATE degree programs for educators that are available at Chadron, Peru and Wayne State Colleges. Fifteen are offered entirely ONLINE. Check them out at www.csc.edu or www.peru.edu or www.wsc.edu.**



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www.nscs.edu

Ogallala Scholarship Program Extremely Generous

All Post-Secondary Bound Seniors Earn Grant from OEA

Many local education associations across Nebraska offer scholarships to select and deserving high school seniors as they graduate.

Few, however, match the generosity of the Ogallala Education Association.

Since 1988, members of the OEA have given a scholarship to every Ogallala High School graduate headed to a post-secondary school.

The scholarship dates to 1987 when OEA members Marbara Kuhlman and Rita Shimmin pitched the idea to membership. The Graduate Incentive from Teachers (GIFT) Foundation was incorporated, and an initial cookbook sale fundraiser collected enough cash that in 1988 each college-bound graduating OHS senior received a \$50 cash grant.

Foundation President Allen Cerny said that through a number of fundraisers, primarily a tailgate supper, the foundation has been able to grow and increase the scholarships. Today, each post-secondary-bound OHS grad receives \$150.

Members hope that the foundation has endowed the scholarship program so that



OEA Foundation Board: Members of the Ogallala Education Association Foundation Board are, from left, Pam McBride, President Allen Cerny, Scholarship Chair Kim Mestl, and Rosa Zimmerman. Not pictured is Tracy Cone.

it is viable to perpetuity, with scholarships funded from the investment portfolio's interest.

Cerny also said there are plans to raise the scholarship amount.

"We are looking to raise more funds so that the scholarships can be increased to \$200," said GIFT Foundation President Allen Cerny. "No fundraising plans are set at this time, but this is a goal the board has

identified."

A majority of OEA members belong to the GIFT Foundation, which is a separate entity from the OEA, designated for receiving donations and disbursing scholarship funds. A local accounting firm serves as the investment agent, and the portfolio is reviewed each year by the GIFT Foundation board of four active and two retired educators, as well as attending membership.

OEA members are asked to petition to become a member of the GIFT Foundation, said Cerny.

"The petition is a formality to designate that the two organizations are separate entities," he said.

Meanwhile, graduating seniors must make application for the scholarship, must attend Academic Honors Night to receive the award, must graduate and must use the scholarship within the following year.

The program has been very successful to date, said Cerny.

"Since the first year we have awarded a total of 1,298 scholarships, representing, as of this year, more than \$126,150," he said.

If members or leaders from other local associations are interested in founding a scholarship program using the OEA model, Cerny said he would be glad to provide details. Reach out to Cerny at:

alcerny@opsd.org

State Tweaks Loan Options; Endorsements Now OK

Legislature Puts Select Endorsements in Forgiveness Criteria

Tweaks made to the State of Nebraska's loan forgiveness program for educators will allow some teachers seeking additional endorsements to participate in the program.

The Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Act provides loans to educators in certain programs to improve their skills and knowledge through graduate education programs. Upon meeting certain teaching requirements, those loans may be forgiven.

During the 2016 session of the Nebraska Legislature, the program's availability was expanded. Previously, the program criteria for eligibility required coursework for advancement toward a post-graduate degree. With the Legislature's action, the criteria now includes loan forgiveness for a graduate course of study leading to an additional endorsement in a shortage area.

NSEA supported widening the program to include certain endorsements.

"This program has been a great success,

judging by the numbers of Nebraska educators who have been able to utilize it," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "Feedback from members who used the plan requested the addition of these endorsements."

There are two loan forgiveness programs operated by the Nebraska Department of Education under the Excellence in Teaching Act (ETA). The Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (AETP), assists college students who are seeking graduate degrees and certification. The Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program benefits teachers already in the classroom. Here is an update on both programs, as reported to the State Board of Education:

Attracting Excellence to Education Program

The 2015-16 school year was the 10th for the program. Since its inception, 1,179 college students seeking their initial certification have received loans totaling just under \$3.3 million.

Of those loan recipients, 50 percent have cancelled their loans by meeting teaching requirements; 18 percent are currently teaching; 16 percent are enrolled in their

program; 15 percent are repaying, have repaid, or have had the award discharged; and 1 percent have declined the funds.

Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program

This past year was the seventh year of operation for the EETP, though the Legislature has provided funding in just five of those years. To date, 2,233 loans of not quite \$4.3 million have been provided.

Of those loans, 36 are currently enrolled in their program; 31 percent are currently teaching; 25 percent have cancelled their loans by meeting program requirements; 5 percent are repaying, have repaid or have had the loan discharged; and 3 percent have declined the funds.

The EETP included about \$1.2 million in funding for the application period that opened on April 1. Through the EETP, eligible candidates may apply on an annual basis up to \$175 per credit hour, to a maximum of \$3,000. Candidates can apply for the loans for up to five consecutive years. For details, watch future issues of *The Voice*, or check the NDE website at:

www.education.ne.gov/

NEA Foundation Offers Grant Writing Course

Thousands of grant opportunities exist that bestow educators with dollars to be used to enhance their teaching practice. But many teachers, while interested in applying for a grant, don't know where to begin.

The NEA Foundation offers a free, on-line course designed to help educators navigate the process of applying for a grant.

Grant Writing for Educators is one of 19 online courses available on the NEA Foundation website. It introduces educators to various facets of grant research, writing and more. The course can be completed by individuals or by small groups, and is a valuable asset for novice grant writers as well as seasoned educators who are looking to sharpen their grant writing skills.

The NEA Foundation offers – and takes pride in – the two types of grants it offers multiple times each year. The Learning & Leadership Grants are largely aimed at professional development opportunities. The Student Achievement Grant program is aimed at improving the academic achievement of students in K-12 public schools and public higher educa-

tion institutions.

To learn more about the grant possibilities, check out the website at neafoundation.org. To learn about the free grant writing course, go to the website and look for the 'Writing Tutorial' under the 'Resources' tab.

Submit a Lesson Plan for Chance at \$500

Interested in winning \$500 for your classroom? SaveOnEnergy.com is looking for the best lesson plans for teaching students about energy or sustainability.

The folks at SaveOnEnergy.com teach consumers about the aspects of energy in the website's Learning Center through blog posts, videos and infographics. Plus, guides from Nico the Ninja help teach kids about electrical safety and energy savings.

The site encourages lesson plans that vary in scope and topic, and participants are welcome to cite information found on the SaveOnEnergy.com Learning Center.

SaveOnEnergy.com will award six \$500 grants, in the form of Visa Reward Cards, to be used toward classroom

materials and activities. Winning lesson plans will be featured on SaveOnEnergy.com for other teachers to use as resources.

The deadline for submission is Oct. 21. For details, go to:

saveonenergy.com/teacher-grant/

Docents Needed at Nebraska Museum

Docents are needed at the Nebraska History Museum to provide guided tours for students and adults, particularly fourth graders studying Nebraska history. Information about Nebraska's amazing past is conveyed to students through hands-on educational experiences, as the museum staff continues to develop core exhibits at the museum.

An eight session docent education series will be given from 9 a.m. to noon on these dates: Oct. 6 and 20; Nov. 3; Dec. 1; Jan. 5 and 19; and Feb. 2 and 16. The series will prepare docents to give tours and offer insights into Nebraska's history.

If you are willing to learn and communicate stories of Nebraska history using historical objects and biographies, and are interested in working with groups of all ages



Scrumptious Dining in Banner County!

Members of the Banner County Education Association know how to start the school year. The BCEA started this year with a "cream can dinner" — raw potatoes, carrots, meat and other food items steamed in a cream can for a length of time, then served in foil-lined troughs.

At left, Nancy Olsen arranges the food in a pig-themed trough just before serving.

Above, members of the BCEA show their solidarity in NSEA 150th anniversary t-shirts. In the front row, from left, are Jeri Revelle, Nancy Olsen, Bill Gifford, Kari Gifford. Back row, from left, are Brandi Tallmage, Elizabeth Bohac, Jessica Stauffer, Angie Hilbert, Robin Parsons and Priscilla Bastian.

and interests, the museum has openings.

For details, contact Deb McWilliams at 402-471-4955, or at:

deb.mcwilliams@nebraska.gov

Dyslexia Group Reviews Changing Times

The Nebraska Dyslexia Association's Fall Celebration will feature University of Nebraska-Lincoln Assistant Professor Dr. Stephanie Wessels as keynote speaker.

The conference will be held in Lincoln on Sunday, Oct. 16.

Wessels teaches in UNL's Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education and will submit to listeners that "Changing Times Demand Changes in Teacher Education." She will discuss a unique English Language Learner program at UNL for elementary education pre-service teachers. The program was necessitated by changing demographics in Nebraska.

Also on the agenda: Principal Dr. Don Ridder and a seventh grade student will talk about "Journeys with Dyslexia."

The event will be held at St. Mark's Methodist Church, 84th and Pioneers

Blvd., Lincoln, from 9-11 a.m. on Oct. 16. No registration is required.

For details, call 402-434-6434, or go to:

www.ne-da.org

Where in the World Did the Pilgrims Land?

A new public education endeavor – the WHERE Project – has launched the 400th year commemoration of the Pilgrims' 1620 landing in North America.

The project is built around a simple premise: the foundational question of where the Pilgrims first landed and inked the Mayflower Compact. The project will help to broaden understanding of important facts leading to creation of American Democracy. The program will draw students into a web-based interactive art, photo, essay and science competition with engaging ways to relive the path of the Pilgrims as they journeyed to what is now Provincetown, MA.

The initiative is built on a set of critical questions designed for discovering native cultures and aspects of the journey of the 102 Pilgrims, and their drafting and unanimous adoption of the Mayflower

Compact as America's first declaration of equality and justice.

Each student or team can enter with an art, photo, essay or science project. For details, visit:

[provincetowntourismoffice.org/
WHERE](http://provincetowntourismoffice.org/WHERE)

SAC Museum to Host Teacher Day Nov. 12

The SAC Aerospace Museum at Ashland will host Teachers Day on Saturday, Nov. 12. The event includes free admission for all teachers and their dependent children from noon to 3 p.m. on that day.

There will be a tailgate party with snacks and a guest speaker at 1 p.m. There will also be a field trip preview during the open house, along with a chance for teachers to check out the museum's new interactive Children's Learning Center. Museum officials also offer a free welcome gift to teachers.

Teachers may stay for the 5-8 p.m. Family Night Extravaganza. Register by Oct. 8 at:

[sacmuseum.org/teacher-event-
registration/](http://sacmuseum.org/teacher-event-registration/)

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Save With Susan

NSEA members will soon see a new representative for NEA Member Benefits. Susan Estes succeeds David Glenn as the representative in Nebraska.

Estes worked in the private sector before joining the education family as a special education teacher. She taught in Owenton, KY, for 6 years before joining the Kentucky Education Association as a UniServ Director, a post she held for five years before moving to NEA Member Benefits.



Estes

"I truly look forward to working with teacher members and helping them understand and access the great programs that are part of Member Benefits," said Estes.

The Nebraska assignment is Estes' first for Member Benefits. She also serves members in Kansas and Colorado.

Cash Rewards Card Gets Upgrade

Members with the NEA Cash Rewards Credit Card are used to great benefits: earning 1 percent cash back everywhere, every time; 2 percent cash back at grocery stores; and 3 percent cash back on gas.

With the NEA Cash Rewards Card, you can maximize your savings by combining the fantastic values you get at a wholesale club, earning 2 percent cash back on both in-store and online wholesale club purchases.

If you are a cardholder and participate in online banking, you get your FICO Score for free. New customers opening an NEA Cash Rewards Card account are also eligible for a \$100 cash rewards bonus offer!

For details on all of the NEA Cash Rewards Card benefits and terms, please visit: www.neamb.com/cashrewards

Save at the GE Appliances Store

The GE Appliances Store is an exclusive, full service, and secure online shopping site where NEA members can purchase high-quality appliances directly from GE Appliances at discount prices.

Visit the GE Appliances Store to find deals every day on the latest GE, GE Profile Series, GE Café Series, GE Artistry Series, and Monogram appliances, as well as online promotions and rebates. Delivery is available to most homes in the continental U.S., including free delivery on all orders over \$399. Installation and removal of old appliances are also offered on some products.

For more information about the GE Appliances Store, visit:

www.neamb.com/ge

Susan Estes is Nebraska's NEA Member Benefits representative

These Home Money Pits Can Sap Your Savings

These Tips Save Money, Increase Home's Value

By Dr. Penny Pincher | Wise Bread

There are so many expenses associated with paying the bills for a home that it is easy to miss money leaks that are costing you big dollars. Putting a plug into these leaks can make a big difference in your budget. From old-school thermostats to faulty plumbing, here are some of the top money-pits to watch for:

1. Old School Thermostats: I recently replaced my 1980s-era thermostat with a new one for about \$50. Why? Because the old thermostat was leaking money every day. My new thermostat is programmable, so I can automatically avoid heating or cooling the house when no one is home. It's paid for itself in just the first few months.

2. Drafty Windows: It may sound extreme to replace windows to save money on your heating bill, but I was paying hundreds of dollars every month for propane when I moved into an old house with drafty single-pane windows. Old windows are almost as inefficient as having your windows open all winter. Replacing them will reduce your utility bill and add to the resale value of your house. If replacing windows is too big of a project, you can install clear plastic film over your windows for a few dollars each to help keep the money from flowing out.

3. Old HVAC Systems: I once lived in a house with a 40-year-old furnace. My home inspector said it was built like a tank, and I think it was about as energy efficient as a tank, too. If you plan to stay in your house for a few years, an energy efficient HVAC system can easily pay for itself through lower energy bills. Plus, the new system will increase the value of your house.

4. Poor Insulation: Don't be fooled. It can be hard to notice a poorly insulated home because the furnace can compensate for this by running more to try to maintain the desired temperature. The most effective place to upgrade your home's insulation is in the attic, since warm air is less dense than cold air and a lot of heat transfer happens through the attic and roof as warm air rises. If your floors are cold, you may benefit from adding insulation under your house, as well. Insulating walls can be a bigger project, but

insulation can be often blown into the joint space in walls in a matter of just hours.

5. Old Appliances: Old appliances are energy hogs compared with newer, more efficient models — especially refrigerators, freezers, and dishwashers. It may be hard to notice that old appliance sitting there quietly sucking down extra electricity all the time, but the cost adds up every month. Some utility companies offer incentives to take away old appliances in order to encourage people to replace them with energy efficient models. And you may even qualify for tax credits related to energy efficient appliances.

6. Bad Mortgage Rates: When you got your mortgage, you probably shopped around and got the best rate you could find. But have you checked your rate lately? You may be paying more than you need to for interest every month. If you plan to stay in your house for a few years, refinancing your mortgage to get a better interest rate can help you hang on to more of your money each month instead of giving it to the banker.

7. Leaky Roof or Gutters: You won't get a bill right away if you have a leaky roof or gutters that don't work properly, but deferred maintenance is like a time bomb that can cost you a huge amount of money in the future in the form of repair bills and reduced property value. Take care of water leaks before they become a money pit.

8. Long Commutes: If your home is far away from work, shopping, and school, your commute is costing you time and money every day. Unfortunately, avoiding this money pit may require moving to a different house. I was able to move about 10 minutes closer to my work location and it made a big difference.

9. Too Much House: If your house is bigger than you really need, you are paying extra every month for your mortgage, utility bills, and property taxes. Consider downsizing to avoid sinking money into paying for space you are not fully utilizing.

This article is from Dr Penny Pincher, the pen name of J. Brian Bishop of Wise Bread, an award-winning personal finance and credit card comparison website.

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Cheers for Miss Bishop

In December 1955, I saw a movie that I have never forgotten. On reflection, it certainly may have been one of the sappiest movies I would ever see, but I loved it because I was a third-grader and the movie was about a favorite, small-town teacher. The teacher in the movie insisted that every student greet her properly every day. Their morning greetings became the title of the movie, “Good Morning, Miss Dove.” When Miss Dove was hospitalized, her former students returned to give well-deserved thanks to their favorite teacher.

I was reminded of that movie the other day as I talked with a local doctor. He said that he admired teachers and the work they did, but he did not understand why education is so conflictual, when it is so important. Yes, education is disputed, but exactly because it is so important. Both parents and teachers understand that education is the most important determinant of a student’s career choice and satisfaction, lifetime earnings, and overall well-being and future success. The choices that are made about virtually every aspect of education are open to critical questioning or opposition. Decisions do matter. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and taxpayers all have a stake in the success of our students. And those voices do not always agree.

Targets of Criticism

That level of continual questioning, criticism, and, often, opposition is a daily burden to those who work in our schools. It is every citizen’s right to question and criticize decisions that may not be sound educational practice. And, ironically, the ones who work every day to make sure students get the very best education are often the targets of criticism from every quarter: parents, taxpayers, their principals, and society. Teaching is not easy and very often, a thankless job. Or so it seems.

A Nebraska author, Bess Streeter Aldrich, wrote

Miss Bishop, a best-selling book that was also later made into a movie, “Cheers for Miss Bishop.” It is the story of a teacher who is forced into retirement after many years of teaching. As many (and perhaps most) teachers do, Miss Bishop reflects on a life of service that did not result in great honors or riches. What opportunities had she missed by being a teacher? In true

Hollywood fashion, the movie ends with many of her students, now very successful, coming back to honor her work. Many movies have been made about the important work of teachers. We know these teachers by their movie names: Mr. Chips, Mr. Holland, Miss Dove, Miss Bishop, Miss Barrett, Mr. Thackeray, and many more. But how do we honor and thank our real teachers?

We simply need to say thank you to our teachers for the work they do. We say it out

loud and often. It’s that simple.

‘Thank You’ is Rarely Heard

So, “cheers” for you Miss Bishop, or Miss Dove, or Mr. Black, or Mrs. Lance, or Dr. Alvarez, or any of thousands of names that you carry as the American Teacher. You are the model for movies and books and accolades, but your work is known best (and appreciated most) by those generations of students that come through your classroom. You never hear “Thank you” from most of these students. Their mothers and fathers will say it as they talk about how much you cared about their children, how much they have grown up, have learned, and how much their children still talk about you. The students say it years later as adults when they tell their own children about the difference that you made in their lives. And some may say it when they remember a movie or a book that reminded them of how critical the work is that all teachers do every day for the students of America. So, thank you...and for what you do: Cheers, Miss Bishop!



Saying ‘Thank you!’ NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen visiting the home of author Bess Streeter Aldrich in Elmwood, Nebraska. One of her best-selling books was about a teacher, Miss Bishop.

Head to Aurora for 'Total Eclipse' Story

Find Out About the Future, the Past at NSEA-Retired Fall Conference

Attendees at NSEA-Retired's 2017 Fall Conference will learn a little bit about the future, and a little bit about the past.

A pre-event will feature a "culture and conversation" tour of the famed Plainsman Museum, and museum Executive Director Tina Larson will talk about her work during a conference breakout.

Keynoting the event will be Dan Glomski, the on-site "mad scientist" at Aurora's Edgerton Explorit Center. With Nebraska already targeted as a prime viewing area, Glomski will give attendees the latest news on the Aug. 21, 2017, total solar eclipse.

The conference is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 18, at Aurora's Leadership Conference Center. The "culture and conversation" pre-event, with a light meal and tour will be held on Monday evening, Oct. 17, at the nearby Plainsman Museum at 5:30 p.m. There will be a fee of \$10 per person in advance, payable by Wednesday, Oct. 12, or a fee of \$15 at the door.

Tentative breakout sessions for the Tuesday conference include a Cuba travelogue, photography, health insurance after retirement, funeral planning, climate change, and health and fitness.

Other than the Monday evening event, there is no charge for members to attend. The registration deadline is Oct. 12. To register, call Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or email her at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

Medicare Seminars Coming

NSEA-Retired and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska will host seminars across the state to provide members with important information about Medicare, NSEA-Retired BlueSenior Classic (our Medicare supplement), and the options retirees younger than 65 have for insurance through the Educator's Health Alliance.

The seminars will run from 9:30 a.m. to noon at each location. The seminar will cover the basics of Medicare; the changes in Medicare for 2017; details on BlueSenior Classic, the Medicare supplement endorsed by NSEA-Retired and underwritten by Blue Cross (with optional dental coverage); changes in Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit, for 2017; and how to use the Medi-care website to find an appropriate Part D provider.

The afternoon session will run from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. This session will cover the differences between the four EHA options available to retirees younger than 65. Those options are: a \$900 deductible PPO plan; a \$2,000 deductible PPO plan; a \$3,500 deductible, Health-Savings-Account (HSA) eligible High

Deductible Health Plan (HDHP); and a \$4,000 deductible, HSA-eligible HDHP. Health Savings Accounts will also be explained, as well as how to enroll in an HSA for qualifying plans.

Individuals who are enrolled in one of the EHA insurance plans can change to a higher deductible to be effective on Jan. 1, 2017, if they have completed enrollment applications on file by Dec. 1, 2016. Comparisons of the out-of-pocket costs of each plan design will be described, as well as what you need to do to switch to a different plan design. The seminars will be:

■ **Tuesday, Oct. 25:** North Platte Holiday Inn Express & Suites.

■ **Wednesday, Oct. 26:** York, Holthaus Convention Center, 3130 Holen Ave. (1.25 miles north of I-80 Exit).

■ **Friday, Oct. 28:** Norfolk, Lifelong Learning Center, 701 E. Benjamin Ave.

■ **Monday, Oct. 31:** LaVista, Educational Service Unit #3, 6949 S. 110 St.

No registration is required.

Election Update

NSEA-Retired members will elect two general officers of the Association next spring: President and Vice President. Current NSEA-Retired Vice President Tom Black is eligible to run for re-election if he chooses to do so. Current NSEA-Retired President, Roger Rea, is term-limited. If the NSEA-Retired Board votes to make changes in the current term limits, Rea may be eligible to run again (dependent on how term limits are modified). A decision on changing term limits will be made at the Oct. 17 meeting of the NSEA-Retired Board of Directors.

Three of the six District Director positions are also up for election. District Directors will be elected for Capitol, Elkhorn and Sandhills. Current Capitol director Pat Etherton; Elkhorn director Francis Rohrich; and Sandhills Director Dee Gillham; are each eligible to seek re-election. All are three-year terms, beginning Aug. 15, 2017.

Delegates will also be elected to represent the retired members at NSEA Delegate Assembly (to be held in Lincoln on April 21-22, 2017) as well as delegates to NEA Representative Assembly (to be held in Boston, MA, June 30-July 5, 2017). Delegates to NSEA-DA and NEA-RA are elected for one-year terms.

Complete details regarding the election procedures as well as the process for filing for election will be posted on the NSEA-Retired website, www.nsea.org/retired, after Jan. 20. Any NSEA-Retired member in good standing is eligible to run for office. Candidates for District Director, NSEA Delegate Assembly or NEA Representative Assembly must live in the NSEA District they wish to represent.

— Renae Kelly, Editor
renaekelly@gmail.com



Ready for Winter: Winners of NSEA-Retired's quilt and baby blanket raffles have received their prizes. Wheeler Central member Marcia Smith, above, won a crocheted afghan made by Joyce Huggans, a former NSEA-Retired board member from Burwell. Current NSEA-Retired Panhandle District representative Jim McDermott, below right, presented Alliance member Roberta Ruden with the embroidered baby blanket made by Gloria Boham of Omaha. The raffle raised nearly \$1,000 for the NSEA Children's Fund.



Freye Honored for Teaching Will be Recognized at NEA Foundation Gala

Linda Freye, a kindergarten teacher at Lincoln's Maxey Elementary School, has been named one of 43 public school educators to receive the California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence – one of the nation's highest honors for public educators.

They will be honored at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Gala in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 10.

In addition to being recognized for excellence in instructional and professional practice, awardees are nominated by their peers for their dedication to the profession, community engagement, professional development, attention to diversity, and advocacy for fellow educators.

"Teachers have to believe in their students and believe that they can learn. I use whatever strategy I need to use to reach a child," Freye said.

Because the NEA Foundation values both professional development and diversity, awardees are invited to participate in its Global Learning Fellowship. Fellows learn how to prepare their students for a connected and multicultural world in this comprehensive, yearlong professional development program, which includes an international field study next June.

Freye is the Nebraska nominee by virtue of receiving NSEA's Teaching Excellence Award at the Association's 2015 Delegate Assembly.



Freye

Kris Burns

Marion Kristine "Kris" Burns, a former teacher at Omaha, and a reading teacher for the Blair Public Schools, died unexpectedly on Sept. 7. She was 65.

Burns was described as kind, sweet, a champion for students and able to work magic in her reading classroom.

An Omaha North High grad, she earned a bachelor's degree from Creighton University and completed her teaching requirements and earned a master's degree at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. She taught Spanish and history for OPS, left teaching to raise four children, and returned to the classroom at Blair's Arbor Park Elementary as a reading para-professional. She taught at Papillion-LaVista for a year, then returned to Arbor Park in 1999.

She is survived by her husband Joe and four children.

Do You Know a Courageous Teacher? Consider a Nomination for the McAuliffe Award

Courage is an important quality not often recognized in teachers. The Christa McAuliffe Prize for Courage and Excellence in Education – awarded through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Education and Human Sciences – recognizes this special form of courage.

"Rewarding courage selects out a slightly different kind of teacher," said Dr. Gregg Wright, creator of the prize.

The teachers who have been recognized are all excellent educators, but they go beyond excellence by showing courage. Courage can be displayed in many different ways, but the common denominator among all the prizewinners is the lasting and positive effect they have had on their students and on their peers. As Sen. Bob Kerrey said in the introduction to the McAuliffe Prize 20-year retrospective magazine, "The trends affecting education today make courageous teachers even more important, affecting every school in Nebraska... Courage is not taught by a curriculum, it is caught from the example of others."

Wright founded the prize as a memorial to Christa McAuliffe, the teacher/astronaut who lost her life in the Challenger space shuttle accident in January 1986. McAuliffe provided a very visible demonstration of both courage and excellence in education – qualities that are found in many Nebraska teachers to the benefit of all our children. The prize provides a way to recognize these teachers, and at the same time honor McAuliffe's courage.

The \$1,000 prize is awarded annually to a Nebraska teacher. The recipient's school receives a \$500 award. For details, go to:

cehs.unl.edu/courage/

Retirement Seminars Available from NSEA-Retired

From Adams to York, from Yutan to Wilcox, the Retirement Planning Seminars provided by NSEA-Retired have reached nearly 10,000 educators over the last 13 years.

The program has been delivered to members in 80 local associations in that time, some more than once. In 2015-16, fourteen seminars were delivered across the state, reaching nearly 600 members.

The leaders of NSEA's six governance districts have agreed to assist with the expense of the seminars again during the 2016-17 association year.

"NSEA members continue to ask for information on retirement planning, and they give our seminars very high ratings," said Roger Rea, NSEA-Retired president.

Any local association may request a seminar, and may join together with other area locals to host a seminar. They generally last about 90 minutes, and will provide a refresher course on the State of Nebraska's defined benefit retirement plan, and some of the options available with that plan, as well as other retirement considerations.

For details, contact Rea via email at:

rrea68154@yahoo.com

Irene Van Winkle

Longtime NSEA member Irene Van Winkle, 83, died at Bellevue on Aug. 20.

A native of Ord, she taught at the elementary level in Valley County Schools, at Amherst, Bridgeport, Hampton and then at Central City for more than 20 years until she retired in 1995.

Van Winkle was a negotiator for the Hampton Education Association, and served as president of the Central City Education Association. She also attended the Summer Leadership Conference and several Delegate Assemblies over the years.

Van Winkle and her late husband Jerry held local and state leadership roles in the Presbyterian Church. She also enjoyed genealogy, reading and camping.

She is survived by two children and their spouses.

Dawn L. Daly

Teacher and NSEA member Dawn L. Daly, 69, passed away at home on Sept. 13, 2016.

She taught for 35 years, first at Auburn, and later at Wasmer Elementary School in Grand Island for many years. After retirement, Daly and husband Rich moved to Lincoln where she became involved in the Women's Club, and PEO and other organizations. She enjoyed book and dinner club and loved playing bridge.

She is survived by her husband and a son and daughter.



NSEA Children's Fund: helping children realize a better today & tomorrow!

Children's Fund Needs Your Help

Campaign for \$150K is Well Under Way with \$18k Collected

The NSEA Children's Fund has made a great difference over 22 years, particularly for children in poverty and children facing devastating loss.

When a member sees a child in need of a warm winter coat, eyeglasses or other necessities, all they need do is call NSEA and ask for the Children's Fund.

Today, NSEA leaders firmly believe it is time to give the Children's Fund a firm footing for the future. At NSEA Delegate Assembly 2016, Association leaders launched a drive to raise \$150,000 for the Children's Fund by October 2017, appropriately the 150th anniversary of NSEA's founding.

That campaign has raised \$18,567 through September.

Every penny raised through October 2017 will count toward the drive. That's an ambitious goal, since the fund typically collects from \$40,000 to \$50,000 in any given year. Expenses, however, can easily surpass \$50,000 in a year.

Local associations are encouraged to brainstorm fundraising ideas: collect change; host a jeans day fundraiser; or consider other ideas to raise funds.

To make donations easier, the Children's Fund is now set up to accept donations through PayPal. Find the PayPal link at:

nsea.org/childrensfund

Questions? Call Sally Bodtke at NSEA at 1-800-742-0047 or at:

sally.bodtke@nsea.org

Speaking of Education

"To teach is to transform by informing, to develop a zest for lifelong learning, to help pupils become students — mature, independent learners, architects of an exciting, challenging future. Teaching at its best is a kind of communion, a meeting of minds."

— *Edgar Dale,*
American Educator
1900-1985



Mailed By: **The Nebraska State Education Association**
605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742



Focused Training: As contract negotiations near, local association members from across the state have been training on NSEA's Navigator program, which assists with comparability studies. Here, during a training in Scottsbluff this summer, NSEA Organizational Specialist Andrea Longoria, left, works with Gordon-Rushville's Niki Waugh. State law sets the bargaining schedule for school districts, and the season opens Nov. 1.

Adopting Classroom Pets

From Lisa Wyrick, a fifth grade math and science teacher from San Jose, CA:

"My classroom animals make even reluctant students want to engage. I've found that fostering classroom pets rather than owning them is the way to go. I have an arboreal salamander, an Oregon alligator lizard, three parakeets and two corn snakes, but the best are my foster rabbits. Instead of taking on ownership, I've arranged with a local foster group to house rabbits who are awaiting adoption.

"The rabbits receive full medical care from the group, and the foster group gave me all the set-up equipment I needed. The rabbits range from babies to adults, and I have them usually for several weeks or months, sending them back to the organization on adoption fair weekends. When one gets adopted, I get another that same day. I keep them in my classroom in a large cage, but most of the school day, the rabbits are running in a fenced in play area within my classroom. They easily litter-box train, and I keep a small shop vacuum nearby for any stray straw that escapes their pen. And, no, they don't smell.

"This arrangement works well because I can turn down a rabbit if a school vacation is near. The rabbits teach students about taking care of animals as well as the whole concept of abandoned or poorly chosen pets and the need to provide homes for animals already in our midst."



Sign up for Works4Me at:
nea.org/tools/Works4Me.html