

THE VOICE

The Nebraska State Education Association ❖ September 2016



REVIEWED & RESTORED

NSEA, OEA Assist in Recovery of Overlooked Pay

Assessment Relief!

Early Childhood Teachers
Get Good News from Blomstedt

The Challenge is On!

Crete Teachers Urge
Children's Fund Donations



Skala Deserved Recognition

Was NSEA Executive

This is one of a series on NSEA's history as the Association celebrates 150 years.

Long before women's liberation, before there was a "glass ceiling" to be broken, Neola Skala did something no other woman had done before, and only one other woman has done since: She served in the top management position at NSEA.

Skala, at the age of 31, served the Association as acting executive secretary-treasurer, the equivalent to today's executive director. She was appointed after Executive Secretary-Treasurer Charles A. Bowers died unexpectedly on Feb. 5, 1938.

Skala served seven months, until Scottsbluff Superintendent Dr. Archer L. Burnham was named to succeed Bowers. Photos of Bowers, Burnham and 11 of the 13 other executive directors have graced the walls of NSEA for years. No photo of Skala was posted – in fact, there were no photos of Skala in the Association's photo archive.

It turns out a her photo was just a phone call away.



Photo Search

NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen wrote the 130-year history of the Association, published in 1997.

He wrote "The significance in 1938 of naming a woman as Acting Secretary can perhaps best be appreciated by the fact that, 46 years later (in 1984), Judy Behnke was believed to be only the third woman in the United States to hold the chief staff position of an education association when she was named NSEA Executive Director.

"Miss Skala was congratulated for her executive ability during her seven months as Acting Secretary, but it is difficult to believe that any woman at that time would have been seriously considered as a permanent chief of staff," wrote Christiansen.

Editor, Author

Skala had the credentials. The 1940 edition of *Who's Who in Nebraska*, said she earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska in 1927 and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa that year.

After graduation, she worked at the *Lincoln State Journal* in

the society department and as a feature writer. She earned a master's degree from the university in 1929, and then began work as an assistant in the English and journalism departments at the university. In 1931, she started work at NSEA as assistant editor and first assistant to Bowers. In 1932 she published *Our Nebraska Capitol*, the book-length story of the then-new state capitol building. Her Feb. 15, 1992, obituary notes that in 1938 she was national chair of the Rural Education Committee.

Her entry into the 1940 *Who's Who in Nebraska* listed her hobby as education. She loved education so much that she gave 95 percent of her estate to the university.

Very Few Leads

Christiansen believed Skala's service should be recognized with a photo alongside other execs. For years, NSEA staff researched files and microfilm, called various libraries and scoured newspaper clippings. An only child, and never married, Skala left few leads.

In 2011, a contact at the university noted that Skala's cousin was listed in paperwork detailing a scholarship in her name. A call to the cousin, in Florida, revealed he had Skala's high school graduation photo, with the imprint of a photographer in West Point.

From retired West Point teacher Tom Black it was learned that Skala's mother's maiden name was Wostrel. NSEA Assistant Director of Communications Al Koontz called a former colleague, Cindy (Wostrel) Jeffrey, now the executive director at Health Education Inc., in Lincoln.

Yes, said Jeffrey, Neola Skala was her aunt. The family had suitable photos, including the college graduation photo shown here.

"Neola certainly loved and believed in education," said Jeffrey. "She would use every spot on a piece of paper, not wasting anything. She would let repairs go on her house, always saving every penny that she could to put that money into her estate. She gave almost all of her estate to the University and the Journalism College because she believed so strongly in education and was so grateful for it.

"I know my family appreciates that her picture will hang at NSEA, and I certainly do, too."

Cover Story:

These three Omaha educators — Mariel Kloppenborg, Lisa Tingelhoff and Jessica Mukherjee — were among five who discovered they had not been paid for extended hours. They turned to OEA and NSEA, and the results were swift and impressive. For details, turn to

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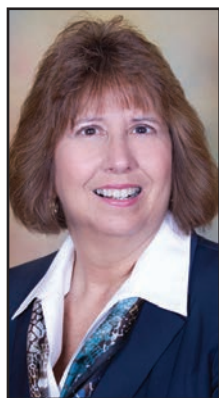
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It is a Small, Small World



**NSEA President
Nancy Fulton**

“

There is no doubt that some of those children helped will go on to bigger and better things.

”

*It's a world of laughter, a world of tears.
It's a world of hope and a world of fears.
There's so much that we share,
That it's time we're aware.
It's a small world after all.*

My husband and I recently celebrated a milestone wedding anniversary with a weekend at a Nebraska bed and breakfast. The husband of another couple staying overnight happened to be a classmate of mine during our elementary school days at a rural Iowa school. Our parents were close friends.

While reminiscing – and boring our spouses to the fullest – my classmate mentioned that it really is a small world we live in. His remark immediately brought to mind the infectious melody from the Fantasyland ride at Disney theme parks. While the lyrics are simple, the song is easily translated into many other languages, and “It’s a Small World” is said to be the single most performed and most translated piece of music ever.

Written as a paean to global peace and unity following the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the song is still relevant, given today’s unsettled and angry world.

Unexpected Places

That was not the first time I’ve been reminded that it really is a small world.

As I travel the state for different association events, I have the pleasure of reacquainting with former teaching colleagues, with former colleagues who have become administrators, and even with former students who have become professional educators (you never know where a former student might suddenly enter your life, so prepare them well – more on that later).

I consistently meet people I know in unexpected places. I have encountered a Nebraska neighbor in a restaurant in Las Vegas. I was surprised to bump into a college roommate on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Thanks to the marvels of social media, I have been able to connect with cousins in the Netherlands, my mother’s birth country. My granddaughters Facetime with children living in Sweden and Iran, thanks to the international friendships of their parents.

In a salute to all the children of the world, Disney

presents animated figures in traditional costumes frolicking in settings of many lands. Many of us have visited a Disney theme park and experienced that joyous exhibition firsthand.

Yet many Nebraska children have not had such wonderful opportunity. Their more basic concerns include the next meal, nightly shelter or a warm winter coat.

Campaign Underway

NSEA members know that many of their students live in such extreme need. These children face shortages of food, clothing, medication, or medical and dental services. To answer those needs, NSEA established the Children’s Fund 22 years ago. The fund exists to ensure that the physical, social and emotional needs of our students do not stand in the way of their educational success.

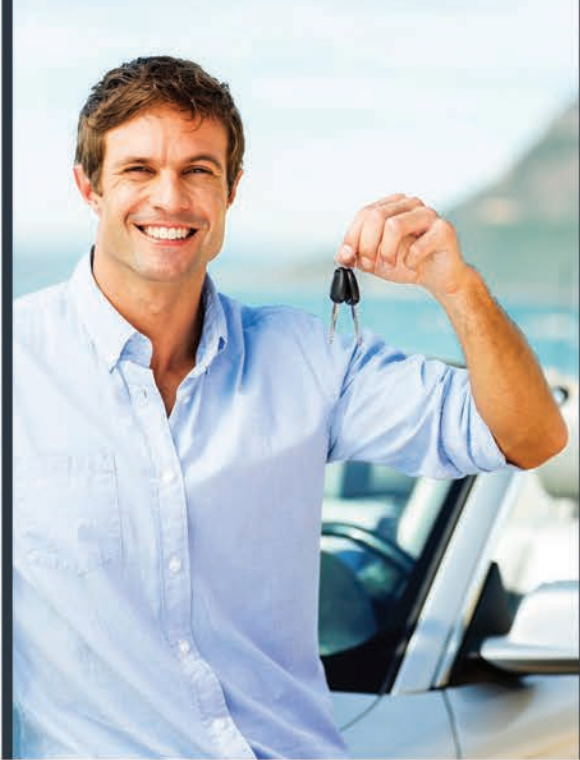
Today, the Children’s Fund is also in need of support. To that end, the #150k4KIDS campaign is a key part of NSEA’s Sesquicentennial celebration. In April, NSEA’s six district presidents launched the ambitious campaign, which aims to raise \$150,000 for the Children’s Fund by October 2017, the 150th anniversary of NSEA’s founding.



The Challenge is Made!

As part of that campaign, local association leaders are asked to consider fundraisers for the Children’s Fund. The members of the Crete Education Association have already started, and kicked in \$2,000 raised at a concession booth last spring (see story on page 15). The CEA membership wholeheartedly agreed that because Crete students benefit from the Children’s Fund on a regular basis, it was the responsibility of CEA members to give back. In fact, CEA leaders also issued a challenge, and urged other local associations across the state to conduct fundraisers. The rationale is that if every local participated, and if locals the size of Crete or larger each raised \$2,000 or more, the campaign goal could be easily met.

There is no doubt that some of those children helped will go on to bigger and better things. In fact, some of them might become teachers. You might even bump into one of them down the road someday, because, as we all know, “... it’s a small, small world.”



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Report: Teacher Pay Penalty Grows

Educators Now Earn 17 Percent Less Than Similar College Grads

The Economic Policy Institute sums up the problem facing American education: “There is an increased emphasis in building a quality teacher workforce, but little attention paid to the pay penalty teachers face for working in their profession.”

Now an August report by the EPI quantifies the penalty and says the teacher pay penalty is bigger than ever. Weekly wages for public school teachers in 2015 were 17 percent lower than comparable workers. In 1994, that gap was just 1.8 percent. Even counting compensation, with benefits, the gap was at 11.1 percent. Among findings:

- Average weekly wages (inflation adjusted) of public-sector teachers decreased \$30 per week from 1996 to 2015, from \$1,122 to \$1,092 (in 2015 dollars). In contrast, weekly wages of all college graduates rose from \$1,292 to \$1,416 over this period.

- Collective bargaining helps to abate

Advocacy Conferences Set

Local Association negotiations teams should save the dates for NSEA’s Advocacy Conference.

The Panhandle Advocacy Conference, at Gering is Saturday, Sept. 24, at the Gering Civic Center.

A second conference will be held at North Star High School in Lincoln on Friday night, Oct. 7, and Saturday, Oct. 8.

Among tentative topics will be interest-based bargaining, research and preparation, settlement reporting and much more. For details, contact your NSEA field staff representative at 1-800-742-0047.

the teacher wage gap. In 2015, teachers not represented by a union had a 25.5 percent wage gap. The gap was 6 percentage points smaller for unionized teachers.

“An effective teacher is the most important school-based determinant of education outcomes,” wrote authors Sylvia Allegretto and Lawrence Mishel. “It is therefore crucial that school districts recruit and retain high-quality teachers.

Recruiting and retaining such teachers is “particularly difficult” when the supply of

teachers is constrained by high turnover rates, retirements and a decline in students opting for teaching as a career.

“In light of these challenges, providing adequate wages and benefits is a crucial tool for attracting and keeping the teachers America’s children need,” said the report.

Allegretto chairs the Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics at the University of California-Berkeley and said the penalty must be remedied in order to attract the best and brightest to teaching. She said the idea that teachers are overpaid and overcompensated is “just not true.”

“If you’re having people, especially women, deciding not to go into teaching in the future because teacher pay, which we’re documenting, is falling further and further behind other occupations that they can choose, we have to really question who’s going to be teaching our kids in the future.”

The EPI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank created to include the needs of low- and middle-income workers in economic policy discussions. For details, go to:

www.epi.org

NSEA’S Mobile App is Free, Easy! ‘Like’ Any of NSEA’s Facebook Sites

If you’re connected to social media, you can easily keep up with your professional association!

NSEA maintains several public Facebook pages, and also manages a Twitter account and a Snapchat site – each useful in spreading news about the good work of Nebraska public schools and teachers. Also available, to members only, is a text alert service that lets educators know when immediate action might be needed in order to counter the advance of ill-advised policies or legislation.



NSEA’s outreach efforts began with *The Educational Journal*, in 1872. While today’s magazine, *The Voice*, is made available to members only, NSEA’s social media efforts are available to the world.

NSEA’s Social Media Directory:

- **Facebook:** The “home” page for the NSEA Facebook presence offers breaking news, good news about members, information useful to educators and general discussions about teaching and public schools. Find it at www.fb.com/nsea.org

- **Twitter:** @nsea_org
- **Snapchat:** Search Snapchat for nsea.org

- **Text alerts:** Sign up to receive alerts at www.nsea.org/text

- **Facebook Children’s Fund:** This page promotes the NSEA Children’s Fund, which provides funding for coats, hats, gloves, eyeglasses and other necessities to assist children in need. The page is at: www.fb.com/NSEACHildrensFund

- **NSEA Delegate Assembly:** Planning to attend Delegate Assembly this spring? Find details for that event at www.fb.com/NSEADelegateAssembly

- **Facebook EMAC:** This page promotes NSEA’s Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee. The page is at: www.fb.com/EMACNSEA. Follow on Twitter at @emac_nsea

- **Facebook SEAN:** Found at: www.fb.com/SEANebraska

- **SEAN on Twitter:** @nebsean
- **SEAN is also on Snapchat:** Nebraska_SEAN

The NSEA website is at:

www.nsea.org

Retirement Ahead for NSEA’s Christiansen

NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen informed the NSEA Board of Directors in August that he will retire on the last day of February 2017.



Christiansen

His departure marks the end of 25 years of service to the statewide organization and 40 years of teaching and Association work combined.

“I am at a stage of my life at which I want to follow both dreams and challenges that still remain,” Christiansen said. “I will return to my first love of college teaching and research.”

Christiansen taught at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln before joining the Omaha Public Schools, where he intended to stay for one year. Instead, he became deeply involved in Association work. He was elected president of the Omaha Education Association, and in 1992, was elected to the first of three terms as NSEA president. Soon after, he joined NSEA staff as a field representative, later became associate executive director, and on Jan. 1, 2007, became executive director.

For several years he has taught graduate classes as an adjunct professor for the University of Nebraska-Omaha, the University of Kansas and Park University. The NSEA Board of Directors will begin the search for a replacement this fall.

"I started taking history classes at the University of Nebraska at Kearney — and I was hooked after the first class. The quality of the curriculum and the professors made me decide to keep going and get my master's degree. I wanted a degree that would mean something. In my last year of classroom teaching, I was named Texas History Teacher of the Year. Now I run the social studies department for my entire district. Getting my degree at the University of Nebraska changed my life."

Steve Sonksen, Texas
History, MA
University of Nebraska at Kearney

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One Voice Leads to Assessment Relief

Early Childhood Teachers, NSEA Join to Lessen Demands

Because one teacher spoke up, there is a measure of assessment relief for nearly all of Nebraska's early childhood teachers.

At the urging of what became a chorus of NSEA members, the Nebraska Department of Education has reduced from three to two the number of TS Gold assessments required of most early childhood educators each school year. Classrooms using Title I funds and all classrooms operated by, or in collaboration with Head Start, will continue to require all three checkpoints.

Each TS Gold assessment requires observations that measure a child on a continuum tracking seven categories, with data recorded on more than 60 objectives per child.

Details from each observation are collected and added to the continuum by late fall, late winter and late spring "checkpoint" dates.

The changes came after metro area early childhood educators raised concerns about not having enough time to teach.

One Omaha teacher said her 27 students would result in the need to record data on more than 6,300 objectives. To fall behind in that daily recording meant to never catch up, said another. An Omaha Public Schools administrator said that no grade level in OPS "has as much data documentation as Early Childhood teachers."

Deletion of the February assessment for most early childhood educators will save countless hours recording data, said Omaha Education Association member Julie Grebenick.

"There is no time to do it (record data) during the school day with 17 three- and four-year-olds in the room. Most of us have to do it on our own time," she said.

In the past, Grebenick said she has spent up to eight hours each weekend recording TS Gold data.

Improved Learning

"This is a classic example of members working together with NSEA to cause a change in classroom working conditions," said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. "Improving working conditions for teachers effectively improves learning conditions for children."

Dr. ReNae S. Kehrberg said OPS had



Organized for Change: These six early childhood educators were some of the NSEA members who met over the past year to pursue a change in assessment practices. From left are Becca Dingwell, Faith Keim, Julie Grebenick, Tracy Carlson, Theresa Canady and Sara Foster. Canady and Foster are Papillion-LaVista Education Association members; the others Omaha Education Association members.

sought a reduction in state-mandated early childhood assessment for years. Kehrberg, an OPS assistant superintendent for curriculum instruction and assessment, announced the change to OPS administrators.

"This recent decision is the direct result of lobbying by OPS early childhood teachers, our Early Childhood Leadership Team along with other metro Early Childhood teachers and metro administrators," wrote Kehrberg.

"A special thanks to the leadership in the Omaha Education Association who organized our joint meetings and also supported Early Childhood teachers throughout the process," she wrote.

NDE Responds

It was nearly a year ago that Grebenick told NSEA that assessments had overwhelmed early childhood educators.

With NSEA's help, Grebenick organized other early childhood teachers, and soon NSEA members from Omaha, Millard, Bellevue, Papillion-LaVista, Gretna, Westside, Elkhorn, Springfield-Platteview and ESU No. 3 were meeting with NSEA's organizational specialists to develop a strategy. They eventually conferred with OPS administrators and then with Nebraska Department of Education staff.

In March, Nebraska Commissioner of

Education Dr. Matt Blomstedt, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Deborah Frison and several NDE staffers traveled to Omaha to listen to the concerns of 35 early childhood advocates. Blomstedt announced in late July that the TS Gold assessments would be suspended.

"I appreciate hearing the concerns directly raised by teachers and the collaborative efforts of OEA, NSEA and school districts to help articulate concerns and identify solutions," he said. "Our team at NDE takes seriously the concerns raised and works diligently to recommend changes to the mid-year assessment where we have the authority to do so."

Unencumbered Plan Time

OPS also answered concerns from the OEA early childhood contingent, who said their scheduled plan time, usually coupled with lunch time or with student nap time – in a darkened room with children theoretically sleeping on mats – was ineffective. Those educators now have one day a month devoted to plan time.

"We are elated," said Grebenick. "I don't know what's bigger – one day of plan time or lessening of the TS Gold requirements."

Either way, that is the excitement that can come about through collective action, said Fulton.

"Because one member spoke up, students and teachers in early childhood programs across the state will be better served," said Fulton. "And so will students. That is what it is all about."

"We are elated. I don't know what's bigger — one day of plan time or lessening of the TS Gold requirements."

— Julie Grebenick,
Omaha Early Childhood Educator

BCBS Rates Locked in Place for '16-'17

Reported Industry 'Premium Surge' Won't Affect EHA Plan Participants

A mid-June newspaper report indicating a surge in health insurance premium prices in Nebraska may have caught the eye of many educators.

Not to worry, however, as those who utilize the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska plan through the Educators Health Alliance (EHA) already have a 4.9 percent rate increase locked in for the 2016-17 contract year that began Sept. 1.

"Our rates are set by utilization within our plan," said NSEA Associate Executive Director Neal Clayburn, chair of the EHA Board of Directors.

The newspaper report indicated that some health insurers who offer Affordable Care Act-compliant policies in Nebraska planned to seek rate increase of as much as 35 percent for the 2017 calendar year. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska was one of two companies submitting requests for a 35 percent increase. Other companies sought increases of more than 17 percent.

Insurers said the rate hikes were due in large part to policyholder utilization of more services – and more expensive services – than anticipated.

For Nebraska school districts and educators, the 4.9 percent hike for the 2016-17 school year marks the 14th consecutive year of an increase of less than 10 percent. That figure was released by the EHA in November 2015.

The foundation for the Educators Health Alliance was formed more than 45 years ago when NSEA organized health insurance for every school district in Nebraska. Today, all but three of the state's 245 K-12 school districts, plus some higher education and

EHA: It's Blue Cross in '17-'18

Insurer Chosen via Competitive Bidding

The Educators Health Alliance (EHA) Board of Directors in August selected Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska as the insurer for the EHA program for the Sept. 1, 2017, to Aug. 31, 2018, plan year.

The EHA released a request for proposal (RFP) on March 29. Competitive bids were submitted by three insurers with the capacity to insure the EHA program. After a comprehensive review of the bidding insurers' capabilities, products and costs, the board awarded the contract to Blue Cross.

The EHA engaged its consultant, Actuarial & Health Care Solutions, as well as Buck Consultants, in the evaluation of bids. This team utilized experts in health insurance, actuarial science, pharmacy, medical management and customer service in the evaluation.

The EHA plan's insurance coverage includes more than 80,000 education employees, early retirees and their dependents in more than 400 school groups. Formed by NSEA 45 years ago, the plan is now governed by a 12-member board representing NSEA, the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

other education affiliates participate.

The EHA is governed by a 12-member board that includes six NSEA representatives, and three representatives each from the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

BCBS Applications Due Soon

One of the myriad benefits of NSEA membership is the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska scholarship program.

Three times each year, NSEA members may apply for a scholarship from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska that will help make paying for graduate coursework a little easier. Applications for the fall semester will be taken through Sept. 30.

Applicants must be covered by either single or family Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska health care insurance. Scholarships are for advanced degrees; additional teaching endorsements; or courses for certification. Courses must be from an accredited post-secondary institution for credit. Books and fees are not covered.

Applicants may seek scholarships for no more than three hours of course work

a semester and can only be awarded funds during two of three scholarship rounds (fall, spring and summer) a year. Applicants must apply for course work in the semester the course ends.

Applicants will receive an e-mail receipt (please contact the NSEA if a confirmation receipt is not received). Applicants will be notified of their application status four to six weeks after application deadline.

The goal is to award stipends to the largest number of members from each of NSEA's six governance districts. Since 1986, 5,529 NSEA members have shared more than \$745,000 in Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska dollars. The program does not affect premiums.

Questions? Contact Sally Bodtke at 1-800-742-0047 or via e-mail at:

sally.bodtke@nsea.org



New Health Care, Cost Management Programs will be Offered by BCBS

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska has presented to the Educators Health Alliance Board of Directors a brief description of four new programs that BCBSNE will implement by early 2017. They are:

- **Wellframe:** A texting capability to improve communication with patients involved with the case management program.

- **Fit 4-D:** 12-week telephonic program for diabetic and pre-diabetic education.

- **Radiology Management:** A program for reviewing complex radiology services.

- **Concurrent Review for Inpatient Hospital Care:** Managing the appropriate place of service on hospitalizations.

Watch The Voice, or the EHA website for further details. That website is at:

ehaplan.org

EHA Advocate Greg Long Available to Visit Your School, Answer Questions

In the past, NSEA members and school districts could count on a presentation about health insurance to include copays, coinsurance, premiums and the normal jargon that comes with the PPO plans.

Now, the mission of the Educators Health Alliance is to educate Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan members on the additional benefits of those plans, which include; Health Savings Plans, Limited Purpose 125 flex accounts, premium savings, and the importance of MY Blue.

These features have created a demand to educate NSEA members and to assist them in determining which one best suits their needs.

EHA Advocate Greg Long has visited or will visit members at Conestoga, Arnold, Callaway, Arapahoe, Ravenna and Axtell, among other sites. He encourages local associations to contact him to schedule an update. Reach him at 402-440-9633, or at:

greg@ehaplan.org



Documentation Galore: Teachers at Omaha’s Lewis & Clark Middle School Focus Program collected plenty of data to support the fact that they were unintentionally shorted on their paychecks. From left are Mariel Kloppenborg, Lisa Tinglehoff, Jessica Mukherjee and NSEA Organizational Specialist Carol Hicks.

‘Even the Dog was Happy!’

They Worked Extra Hours at an Omaha Focus School,
but a Provision for Additional Pay was Overlooked.
With NSEA’s Assistance, They Have Been Made Whole.

For the teachers at the Lewis & Clark Middle School Focus Program in Omaha, working a longer day is part of the job.

Thanks to their Association, they are now being paid for those extra hours.

The five teachers on the focus school team understand that their “school within a school” requires an extended day and extended school year – a full 90 minutes a day longer than for other teachers at Lewis & Clark. They also teach a three-week term in June.

They also understand the value of a regular review of their contract and paycheck. Had one of the five not reviewed her pay stub last year, the five would still be working those extra hours at no cost to the school district.

“I even say this to my husband, and I learned it directly: ‘You never know how much you need them (OEA and NSEA) until you really, really need them.’”

— Lisa Tinglehoff,
Lewis & Clark Middle School
Science Teacher

Instead, with the assistance of the Omaha Education Association and NSEA, they are being paid correctly and each of the five has received back pay totaling more than \$10,000.

“I was really happy, my husband was happy, my dog was happy!” said Mariel Kloppenborg, a math, algebra and pre-algebra teacher.

“It was amazing how quickly it happened, and how all parties – including the school district – worked to fix the problem,” she said.

Language arts teacher Jessica Mukherjee agreed.

“Everybody worked together to make sure everything was made right. I’m still smiling about it,” said Mukherjee.

Paycheck Review

During the 2015-16 school year, the focus school team members were in discussions with administrators about work hours and how the team fit in to

the daily schedule.

Science teacher Lisa Tingelhoff said the team members were unsure of contract time and hours, and so asked for a copy of the contract. It was then that special education and resource teacher Lya Gillott reviewed her paycheck and realized she was not being paid for extended hours.

“Then each of them went and looked at their paychecks,” said NSEA Organizational Specialist Carol Hicks. “It was largely due to Lya that this began.”

Teachers and administrators at Wilson Elementary School – which feeds students into Lewis & Clark – had established the focus program. When it came time to advance the focus program into the halls of Lewis & Clark, it happened quickly. The focus team’s contract was based on Wilson’s contract model, but the implementation of a provision for additional pay for additional teaching hours was apparently overlooked.

“I’m not sure anyone in the system knew the variance in pay was to happen,” said Tingelhoff. “I don’t think it was an intentional oversight at all.”

‘Better Understanding’

Once the pay shortage was discovered, Hicks and former OEA President Chris Proulx helped the five navigate and understand the complexities of their contract and paychecks.

“Being naive, I just assumed I was being paid accordingly. I didn’t have time to investigate it on my own, and I didn’t understand all the details,” said Tingelhoff.

“Having Carol and Chris help walk us through the numbers and through the contract was great help. Now I have a better understanding of the contract.”

Tingelhoff also credited the OPS administrators, from the building level on up, with being supportive. The response from administrators was quick, and all five – including humanities teacher Suzanne Croisant – received the back pay in April.

“The acknowledgement of that extra time, and the foresight and understanding that, going forward, we are compensated correctly, is important,” said Tingelhoff.

‘You Never Know...’

Tingelhoff said “I root for new teachers to be a part of OEA.” Most members, she said, don’t understand the

Veteran Grand Island Negotiator: Review Your Pay Stubs Regularly

Paycheck Errors are not Uncommon, says Koch

Every school employee should check his or her paycheck for accuracy at least once a year, says Tom Koch.



Koch

He speaks with experience. In 30-plus years in various roles on the Grand Island Education Association’s negotiating team, Koch has seen teachers underpaid, and sometimes overpaid.

“It is incumbent on the staff member to take a look (at their paycheck) and determine ‘am I at the right place on the salary schedule,’” said Koch.

With 900 certificated employees at Grand Island, Koch said a paycheck error rate of one percent will result in a handful of mistakes in any given school year. Fortunately, he said the school district provides him with data on salary schedule placement each year for negotiations. He reviews the data and usually spots a few placements that don’t look quite right.

In most cases, the placements he questioned have been correct – placed at the correct step for reasons and duties not outlined on the schedule. “But sometimes I will find a person who is misplaced,” he said.

When it occurs that the district has overpaid an employee, the district, as might be expected, wants that money back. Fortunately, the Grand Island administration, as a matter of policy, sends out salary schedule placement information to each employee via email once a year.

“That allows staff to check to make certain they are on the correct salary step,” he said.

He encouraged local associations to talk to their school district about providing such a service. With salary schedule placement information, Koch said educators should be able to calculate whether they are being paid correctly.

benefits of membership.

“I even say this to my husband, and I learned it directly: ‘you never know how much you need them (OEA and NSEA) until you really, really need

them,’” she said.

Mukherjee called the OEA and NSEA assistance another great resource.

“We definitely needed that extra resource in this case. I’m so grateful.”

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On the Convention Floor: Smiles abound as these three NSEA members pose for the camera on the floor of the 95th NEA Representative Assembly. From left are Lynne Henkel, Tanishia Butler and Megan Hobbs, all of Bellevue.

RA Messages are Loud, Clear

New Teacher Support Called Vital; End Sought for School to Prison Pipeline

Two messages came through loud and clear at NEA’s 95th Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C., in July.

First, delegates – including nearly 100 NSEA members – heard a plea from NEA leaders to the nation’s policymakers to help end the school-to-prison pipeline.

Second, NEA Executive Director John Stocks said current Association members need to act with a sense of urgency to recruit and give voice to a new generation of educators.

Strong public schools depend on strong unions, so the NEA must ensure the next generation of educators are supported in practice; provided a voice in their profession; and given an opportunity to lead on their passion for justice for students, he said.

“We must become relevant to them, to help them meet the changing needs of their students...to help them be successful educators, and to tap into their idealism,” Stocks said.

“And we must act with urgency.”

It’s time to stop talking and start listening, he said. Association leaders shouldn’t tell new educators what they want or



Pro and Con: To rise above the din and fray of the convention hall, NSEA members use whiteboards to remind the state delegation of the chosen stance on New Business Items and other action. Ed Aken, Lincoln, above, signals support, while Marcos Ferreira, Omaha, at right, indicates opposition to an issue.



need to succeed, it should ask them what they need. Don’t tell them what the union can do for them, ask them how the union can help them.

A Busy Pace

Nebraska delegates kept busy with a slew of early morning caucuses followed by a full day during each day of NEA’s

95th annual Assembly. Most mornings started at 6:30 a.m., and ended late, as Assembly business stretched into the evening hours.

Several Nebraskans also addressed the Assembly during debate on specific education issues.

“I am proud of our delegates, how they represented Nebraska educators, and how they stood up and spoke out,” said NSEA President Nancy Fulton. “Our members don’t shy away from the issues or the debate.”

Call to Action

Delegates listened as NEA Vice President Rebecca Pringle urged approval of a new NEA policy statement on school discipline and the school-to-prison pipeline. The statement is framed as a call to action to create awareness of the issue by educating educators and the public about the striking racial disparities among the students most affected by it.

Educators will begin to receive training and professional development to help remedy these disparities. Moreover, NEA will develop model discipline policies and guidance to help implement successful discipline strategies based on restorative justice and other just discipline practices.

“We are making a long-term investment. An investment that will command persistence and struggle and commitment and a whole lot of work from every single one of us,” said Pringle.

The NEA Representative Assembly is the world’s largest democratically run meeting, with more than 8,000 delegates from across the country attending.

NSEA’s Own Official RA Photographer!



Ethernon

For several years now, NSEA has relied on the talents of retired Lincoln teacher Pat Ethernon to take photos of the action at NEA’s Representative Assembly. Most of the photos with this story are hers.

Ethernon serves on the NSEA-Retired Board of Directors, has portrayed the Cat in the Hat for Lincoln area schools throughout the school year, and stays busy with a host of other volunteer efforts.

Thanks, Pat, for sharing your time and excellent photographic skills!



NSEA Fac-
es: In scenes from NEA Representative Assembly, clockwise, from top: Omaha’s Faith Johnson, Hastings’ Deb Lyons and Bellevue’s Brad Wellmann sit for the camera; Nebraska NEA Directors John Heineman, Lincoln, and Tracy Hartman-Bradley of Omaha pose in their finery before

a pre-RA back tie event; Microphone 2 gets a lineup at an NSEA caucus, including Michael Geist of Lincoln, Amy Sabatka of North Platte, Tracy Hartman-Bradley and Bridget Donovan of Omaha; Carolyn Grice of Omaha and Rita Bennett of Lincoln share some time together; and April Jorgensen of Lincoln catches up on convention news with the RA’s daily publication.



A Call to Civility

‘We Must Begin to Listen and Communicate Again’

By Thomas Lieske

As an attorney of some years, I had been noticing some disturbing trends in the practice. Courtesy, respect, cooperation and good manners were in seemingly short supply. I believe we need to have a national discussion about applying civility in all walks of our lives – including politics.

To talk about civility, we must first define it. In our society, we have been given a wonderful gift. The Founding Fathers believed that freedom of expression was so important that they enshrined it in our Bill of Rights. It thus became the First Amendment to our Constitution. We have the right to express ourselves in order to persuade, give our opinions and disagree however we choose. There are limits, of course, and those have been defined in our courts and statutes.

At the risk of being called old-fashioned, I choose to define civility as “The Golden Rule.” Civility is pretty simple stuff. It is basically good behavior. It is good manners, as Emily Post taught us over the years. There is never a good excuse to be rude. It is an attitude that shows in our speech, our voice, our choice of words and how we interact with others.

Coarse, Ugly

Much of our political speech has become coarse, ugly, rude and demeaning. In many instances it has become inflammatory to the point of inciting violence. Not what the Founding Fathers envisioned. Some examples: In one of President Obama’s first State of the Union addresses, North Carolina Congressman Joe Wilson called the President a liar.

President Obama, in 2014, described the budget that was being proposed by Congressman Paul Ryan, as “a nothing burger, a stink burger.” Sen. Barbara Boxer has been described as displaying brattish behavior in addition to being called a nag, a scold and a shrew, unfit to be a Senator.

People with whom we disagree are often called untruthful, ridiculous with their positions being described as not worthy of a response. I am sure you can easily recall your own examples. Such language is unfortunate, since it so easily works its way into our own speech, thought and attitudes. It is not funny or cute. It is not instructive or helpful. It does not advance the discussion and can be divisive. Worst of all,

it can close our minds and lead us to believe that we must talk and act in an uncivil manner.

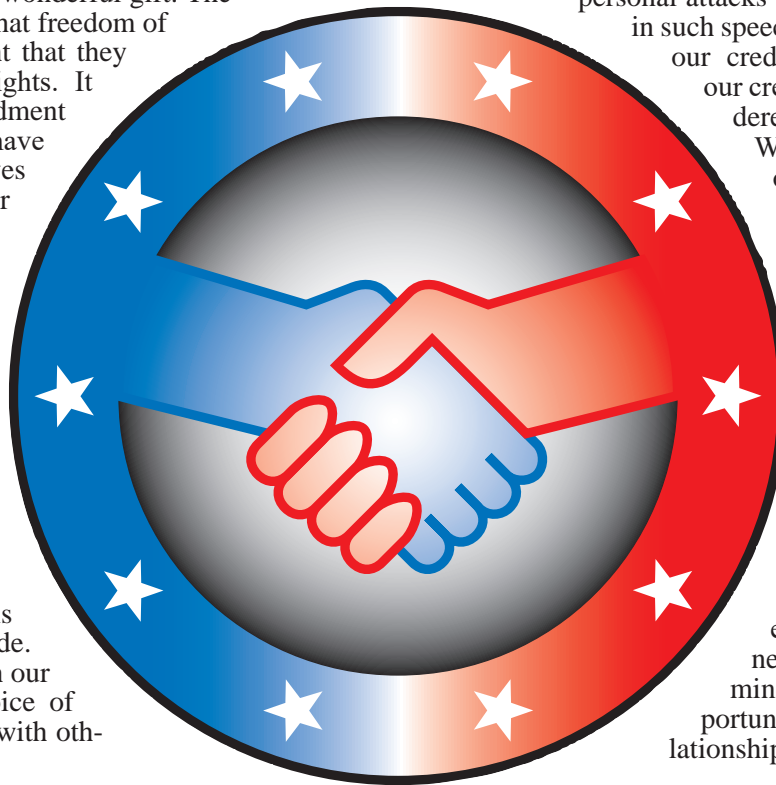
We must begin to treat everyone, with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

A Damaged Reputation

How do we begin to fix this? It begins with all of us.

Let us not be part of the problem, but part of the solution. We must be measured in our speech. Speak carefully. Do not be insulting. There is never a good reason or excuse to be rude. Don’t be harsh and insulting. Never engage in personal attacks or name calling. If we engage in such speech and action, we have not lost our credibility, we have surrendered our respect and our dignity. Worst of all, we have damaged our reputation and become part of the problem.

Communication is the key. We must begin to listen and communicate again. The technology of our time makes it too easy to communicate in truly impersonal ways. Emails, texting, twitter and all other like forms, are not true communication. Pick up the phone, schedule a meeting over lunch. Be willing to listen to those who express contrary positions. We need to do this with an open mind which allows us all the opportunity to move forward in our relationships.



Civility Protects Society

My dad taught me many years ago that “It is better to be thought a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.”

Incivility can make us the fool. Civility protects our society. It allows us to solve problems in the proper way. That is without violence and anger. Incivility is toxic since it hurts our ability to get things done, it wastes time, and diverts us from the issues at hand.

President John F. Kennedy told us many years ago that “civility is not a weakness.” It may in fact be our greatest strength if we choose to make it so.

I believe that there are two kinds of people in the world today. Those whose incivility makes them part of the problem and those whose civility makes them part of the solution. We must make the correct choice.

Thomas Lieske is an attorney in Minden. He wrote these remarks as part of an address to political science majors at the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

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Crete Local Draws 'Line in Sand'

Local Challenges Others to Raise Cash for Children's Fund

The 100 or so members of the Crete Education Association have thrown down the gauntlet. They've drawn a line in the sand.

The challenge to every NSEA local Association is this: Raise cash for the NSEA Children's Fund. With the fund in need of assistance, and with a campaign on behalf of the fund underway and aiming for a \$150,000 goal, the timing is serendipitous.

CEA President Jill Shaw first heard of the idea of challenging other locals to raise money for the fund during an NSEA membership meeting in York before school started. Members had hosted a concession stand at a spring open house for Crete's new high school. The event plopped an unplanned-for \$1,800+ in the Association's treasury, and Crete members upped the ante with a \$2,000 check handed to NSEA President Nancy Fulton in August.

"We realized we had a surplus, and asked at our membership meeting what we should do," said Shaw. "Everybody was glad to give to the Children's Fund."

Vice President Matt Hoffman taps the Children's Fund on a regular basis. "If the



A Funding Boost: Members of the Crete Education Association handed NSEA President Nancy Fulton a \$2,000 check for the Children's Fund. From left are Crete negotiator Karen Drevo, Treasurer Kathy Lenertz, Vice President Matt Hoffman, President Jill Shaw, Fulton, and chief negotiator Tiffany Lothrop.



Children's Fund is going to give to us, we have a responsibility to give back," he said.

"It's paying it forward and giving back to the fund," said Treasurer Kathy Lenertz.

The 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 believe the Children's Fund itself needs a bit of assistance.

At NSEA Delegate Assembly 2016, Association leaders launched a drive to raise \$150,000 for the Children's Fund by October 2017, which marks the 150th anniversary of NSEA's founding.

Every penny raised between this past April 1 and 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

OPS Not Paying Some Teachers According to Contract

OEA Seeks Ruling to Ensure Negotiated Agreement is Followed

Because a number of teachers working for the Omaha Public Schools District (OPS) are not being paid according to the negotiated agreement, the Omaha Education Association (OEA), with NSEA's assistance, has taken the district to court.

The Association believes the District has misclassified some certificated teachers as "substitute" teachers and, as such, those teachers are not receiving the compensation to which they are entitled.

NSEA attorney Scott Norby, representing OEA, said OPS has been hiring educators to fill permanent vacancies, and paying them at substitute rates. Those hires develop lesson plans, hand out grades, meet parents and provide other duties performed by cer-

tificated, full-time staff.

"If it walks like a duck, and talks like a duck, then it's a duck," Norby told the Omaha World-Herald.

By mid-May, then-OEA President Chris Proulx said the Association had worked for more than four months in an attempt to resolve the issue with the District.

"We've hit a brick wall," said Proulx.

"We've asked for the information we need to ensure these certificated professionals are being fairly compensated. We've met with the District to explain what information is needed – and required – to be shared. The lack of transparency left us no alternative but to seek a court ruling that will order the District to provide this information."

To resolve the issues, a Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief has been filed with the Douglas County District Court and an Unfair Labor Practice lawsuit has been filed with the Nebraska Commission of Industrial Relations.

"As the certified bargaining agent, we have a responsibility to our members – and I believe to this community and to our students – to ensure the negotiated agreement is adhered to and administered fairly for all of our teachers," said Proulx.

Having highly-qualified, certificated teachers working with students is a top priority of the Association, he said.

"To ensure we are able to continue to recruit and retain such teachers, those teachers must be compensated fairly, in accordance with the negotiated agreement.

"Misclassifying and depriving these certificated teachers of the economic benefit of the negotiated agreement is unfair and it is wrong," said Proulx. "While we had hoped to resolve this issue without asking a court to intervene, the District has left us with no alternative."

Editor's Note: Since May, Bridget Donovan has been installed as the newly-elected OEA president.



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Grants Available to K-12 Educators

The Cornhusker Motor Club Foundation is offering grant opportunities to assist Nebraska K-12 educators. Funding opportunities include traditional grants in amounts up to \$2,000 and specialty grants up to \$500. This year, the Foundation plans to award \$40,000 to Nebraska schools.

The traditional grants are designed to fund innovative programs, school events, community volunteerism efforts, or projects that will significantly enhance the students' classroom experience. Specialty grants may be used for new classroom reading materials that will challenge and excite students. Any employee of a public school grades K-12 in Nebraska may apply.

The online application period ends Oct. 1, and applying is fast and easy. Grants will be awarded throughout the year. For more details, or to review a list of the most recent award winning schools, visit:

www.CornhuskerFoundation.org

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 and interests, the museum has a spot for you. Flexible scheduling, behind the scenes experiences, a chance to learn in-depth history are waiting, along with parking while you volunteer.

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

deb.mcwilliams@nebraska.gov

'Fuzzy Mud' Author Keynotes Plum Creek

Caldecott, Newberry and best-selling authors will be on display at the Plum Creek Adult Conference on Saturday, Sept. 24, on Concordia University's campus in Seward.

Teachers, administrators, media specialists and book lovers are invited.

"From Wayside School to Fuzzy Mud" will be the luncheon topic of author Louis Sachar, known for the Wayside School series. Only 400 luncheon tickets are available, and it is expected to sell out quickly.

Other featured authors and illustrators will be Peter Brown, David Carter, Matt de la Pena, Brian Floca, Loren Long, Sara Pennypacker, Trent Reedy, Aaron Reynolds, Bob Shea and Salina Yoon.

Other topics will cover ELL, social media in the language arts classroom, new non-fiction titles, differentiation in the literacy classroom, and technology in the literacy classroom.

Registration, book sales and author autographing begins at 7:30 a.m. The first session begins at 9 a.m. The last session begins at 3:30 p.m. Authors will autograph after the last session and book sales will remain open.

A special exhibit, *The 2016 Society of Illustrators Original Art Exhibit*, will be displayed in the Marxhausen Gallery on Concordia University's campus. The no-cost gallery is open to the public from Aug. 29 to Sept. 25. Hours are Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1-4 p.m.

Registration for the Adult Conference is \$75, which includes the luncheon with Sachar and five sessions from which to choose.

For payment and registration forms, contact Dylan Teut at 402-643-7483, or find information online at:

www.cune.edu/plumcreek

Middle Level Theme: 'Ditch That Mindset'

The keynote speaker at the Nebraska Association for Middle Level Education Professional Development Institute this fall will urge educators to "free your teaching and revolutionize your classroom."

The institute's theme is "Ditch That Old Mindset: Renew 'This We Believe.'"

Speaking to that theme will be guest presenter Matt Miller, who will urge attendees to "Ditch That Textbook." That's the title of the e-book and blog authored by the Indiana-based Miller that encourages educators to place more reliance on technology in the classroom. Miller is one of about 1,000 Google-certified innovators in the U.S., and has been named one of the top 10 influencers in educational technology and elearning.

The conference is set for Friday, Oct. 14, at York Middle School. Details, including more about the program, registration and a call for presenters, will be found at the Association website at:

www.namlems.org/

Educators Rising Seeks Growth

Nebraska Leaders Hope to Add Members, Chapters

If you have students interested in pursuing a teaching career, you might consider forming a chapter of Educators Rising (formerly Future Educators) in your school building or school district.



NEBRASKA

The Nebraska chapter of Educators Rising has selected "Dive into Education" as the theme for 2016-17, and state chapter officers are ready and willing to visit chapters across the state, or to help jumpstart fledgling Educators Rising chapters.

State Chapter Advisor Nancy Burkhardt said the state officers have set an ambitious goal that includes growing membership.

"Their yearly goals include building membership across the state and increasing conference attendance, improving networking within the organization, and improving events," said Burkhardt.

She noted that there are three opportunities for educators to attend conferences with students, to learn more about the organization, and to ask questions about formation of chapters. Those events are:

The annual Education Expo for future teachers and their advisors, set for Tuesday, Sept. 20, at the University of Nebraska-Kearney student union. The expo, for students in grades 9-12, will include breakout sessions, dorm tours and advisor sessions.

The Showcase of Teaching, also for future teachers and their advisors, on Tuesday, Oct. 4, at the University of Nebraska-Omaha's Roskens Hall. On the agenda will be breakouts, tour of the Roskens College of Education, a student teacher/education student panel discussion, and advisor sessions.

The State Leadership Conference is planned for Thursday, Feb. 23, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln student union. The schedule includes a vendor fair, breakout sessions, a community service project, competitions and advisor sessions.

NSEA is a financial supporter of the Educators Rising chapter in Nebraska.

Educators interested in learning more, or interested in forming a chapter or scheduling a visit by state officers, can look for 'Contact' link under the 'Support' tab on the Nebraska Chapter website, or contact Burkhardt at 402-470-1343, or via email at:

nancy.burkhardt@nebraska.gov

The Nebraska Chapter website is at:

www.educatorsrisingnebraska.org

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Glenn

Members using the plan get a price and a guaranteed savings prior to visiting the dealership. Members can also save up to \$1,000 on used cars and receive free CARFAX reports. To top it off, family members are eligible for the program.

For details, go to the NEA Member Benefits website and click on the blue 'Discounts' link at the top middle of the page, and then look for the 'Home & Auto Discounts' link. The Member Benefits website is at:

neamb.com

You might also want to consider the fleet purchasing price offer from Village Pointe Toyota in Omaha. Purchase or lease new vehicles from Village Pointe at pre-arranged, fleet corporate prices. For details, contact Larry Thomas at 402-496-4444, or at 402-690-7676.

Protect Your Vehicle

Speaking of vehicles, the NEA Vehicle Protection Plan is worth a review, as well.

NSEA and NEA members are eligible for a \$100 discount on any extended vehicle protection policy and also receive these benefits:

- Payment for vehicle repair bills.
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neamb.com

David Glenn is Nebraska's NEA Member Benefits representative

Student Loan Delinquent?

Advice: Select Plan that Better Fits Budget

By Kaitlin Pitsker

Q: My son has fallen behind on his student loan payments. How can he get back on track?

Have him contact the loan servicer immediately. Even one missed payment is considered a delinquency, and federal loans that have been delinquent for at least 90 days are reported to the three major credit agencies. If your son acts soon enough, he can select a new repayment plan that better fits his budget, or he may qualify to delay loan payments through deferment or forbearance. After 270 days, the loan generally goes into default, and the entire balance, including interest, is due immediately. The borrower also loses eligibility for federal loan benefits, including a choice of repayment plans and the opportunity for loan forgiveness.

If the loan is already in default, your son has two options: rehabilitation and consolidation. Under a rehabilitation agreement, the borrower agrees to a reasonable payment (typically 15 percent of his or her discretionary income, as defined by the loan program) and must make nine on-time payments during a consecutive 10-month period before the loan comes out of default. The borrower regains eligibility for federal loan benefits, and the default is taken off the borrower's credit history. Be aware that loans can be rehabilitated only once.

The second option is to consolidate defaulted federal loans through a federal direct consolidation loan. This allows you to replace one or more federal loans with one new, fixed-rate loan. To consolidate a defaulted loan, a borrower must either agree to one of the federal income-driven repayment plans or make three consecutive on-time full monthly payments on the defaulted loans. Consolidation is faster than rehabilitation and restores access to federal loan benefits, but it doesn't remove the default from the borrower's credit history.

For private loans, your son should work with the lender to set up a payment plan. If

Horace Mann Offers Student Loan Seminars to NSEA Members

Educators have a student loan debt problem that is affecting finances, happiness, and in some cases, their careers.

Student loan debt hardship is also causing new college grads to delay life milestones like getting married, buying a house or saving for retirement, says Bankrate.com.

Seventy-one percent of teachers agree that student loan debt is a motivation for young teachers deciding between staying in the profession or switching to a career that pays better, according to a survey by Horace Mann, an insurance and financial services provider for teachers.

Federal programs can help educators reduce their monthly student loan payments or have portions of those loans forgiven. Many educators aren't aware of or think they don't qualify for these programs.

As part of its commitment to helping educators plan for financial success, Horace Mann, an NSEA recommended provider, offers free workshops to explain the different programs and eligibility requirements.

These programs include Teacher Loan Forgiveness, a program for teachers who spend five years working in a low-income school and are eligible to have up to \$17,500 of their Stafford/Ford federal loans forgiven.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness plan forgives the remaining balance on Direct Loans after you have made 120 monthly payments under a qualifying plan, while working full-time for a qualifying employer.

In addition, educators can change repayment plans to one based on income, with monthly payments decreased.

To set a workshop in your local, call Horace Mann Companies regional vice president Cindy Dornbush at 402-680-9382.

the debt is already in collection, have him try to negotiate a settlement with the agency.

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Jeryl
4th-grade teacher, VA

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Benefits

Our Public Values

School begins again for another year, for another generation, for another batch of anxious youngsters who are both excited and scared in beginning their first year in school. In Nebraska, this cycle has repeated itself for over 150 years. The interesting thing is how much has remained the same. As Nebraska gears up to celebrate its sesquicentennial as a state next year, it is a time for all of us to reflect just a little about what has remained of continued importance for the citizens of the state.

Many families may reflect on their own history in the state. Our pioneer families, those who were here when Nebraska was still a territory or those who arrived shortly after Nebraska became a state in 1867, can be justly proud of the individual struggles and contributions of their family members in creating many of the institutions that still exist today. Natives, early pioneers, and later (and recent) immigrants have all contributed in important ways to the “good life” in Nebraska. We have much to be proud of in Nebraska.

‘Will I Like...’

As we look back at the start of school of those pioneer children long ago, we might imagine that the same thoughts and fears that crossed their minds are also the thoughts of today’s students: Will I like my teacher? Will I know any of the other kids? Will I be able to do the work? Will I have any friends? Will I like school? As adults, the important thing for us to remember today is that television, iPhones, computers, or any of the other technological devices of the digital age have absolutely nothing to do with those basic questions of students both today and 150 years ago. The important things we teach our children are not technological. The important things we have taught for the last 150 years have been based on public values. If we neglect those values, we neglect the foundational learning and preparation of our students to be responsible adults in our society.

At one time, the word “value” was suspect in American schools. Fortunately, we have almost gotten over the nonsensical idea that values should not be taught in schools. I remember as a young teacher the shock of my teaching colleague when I talked about values in the classroom. “You are not teaching values to kids, are you?” He was genuinely concerned

about the trouble I would be making for myself. “Of course, I teach values. How else do we expect students to understand how to live in a society?” Americans cannot have it both ways; we cannot continue to despair about student work ethics, bad public behavior, lack of personal responsibility, or respect for people and property and still continue to voice outrage that someone is teaching our children about



Our Foundational Values...Revisited: NSEA Executive Director Craig R. Christiansen visiting the home of President George Washington. Our ideals of liberty, rationality, and well-being for all remain...but only with the continual attention of everyone.

public values.

Ideals Still Remain

What are you doing to teach the most important public values to the children you encounter? Whether you are a parent, teacher, grandparent, or any other adult in the community, you have a responsibility to model and, where appropriate, to explain the meaning of public values to young people.

What are our public values? Public values are those values we hold in common that are important in our public life, in our interactions with one another, or our actions that affect one another. For example, honesty, respectfulness, and care for others’ property are important values that are not only mutually beneficial, but positively contribute to the general, public character of a community. True, our common understanding of some values have changed over time. Inclusiveness, equality, cooperation, diversity, and differences in lifestyle have broadened significantly. Some things have changed with each new school year. Our ideals of liberty, rationality, and well-being for all remain... but only with the continual attention of every adult in every community.

Get Ready for a Night at the Museum!

'Culture, Conversation' will Highlight Pre-Event

There won't be ancient curses or animals and exhibits coming to life as with the movie, but members of NSEA-Retired will be able to enjoy their own "Night at the Museum" in October.

The NSEA-Retired Fall Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 18, at Aurora's Leadership Conference Center. A special "culture and conversation" pre-event with a meal and tour will be held on Monday evening, Oct. 17, at the Plainsman Museum at 5:30 p.m. There will be a nominal fee for the event.

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

Main speakers include Dan Glomski, speaking about the 2017 solar eclipse, and Tina Larson, Plainsmen Museum executive director, leading visitors on a *Journey Through Yesterday*.

More details will appear in the NSEA-Retired Advocate, and in the October edition of *The Voice*. The registration deadline is Oct. 12. To register, call Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or email her at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

Blanket Raffle

Each year, the NSEA-Retired raffles away two blankets, with proceeds given to NSEA's Children's Fund. This year, the two recipients were announced at the July NSEA Board meeting. They were:

■ Roberta Rudden, Alliance, who won the embroidered baby blanket.

■ Marcia Smith, Wheeler Central, who won the crocheted afghan.

The raffle raised \$971 this year, in pace with past years, when an average of more than \$1,000 has been collected.

The embroidered blanket was made and contributed by Gloria Boham, sister of Walta Sue Dodd of the OEA-Retired and past NSEA-Retired Board Metro District director. The afghan was made and contributed by Joyce Huggans, past NSEA-Retired Board Sandhills District director.

Intergenerational Mentoring: Think About It!

On Feb. 24-25, NSEA-Retired will again host the famed Intergenerational Mentoring program, which pairs experienced and retired NSEA members as mentors to college students prepping to enter student teaching or their first year in the classroom.



Well Represented: Nebraska's retired teachers were served well by these five delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C., this past summer. From left are John Jensen and Roger Rea, Omaha; Jim McDermott, Scottsbluff; Carol Krejci, Omaha; and Pat Etherton, Lincoln. They are standing in front of a quilt made from education-related t-shirts.

The program involves a Friday afternoon and evening, and a Saturday morning of training and then establishment of a relationship between the mentor and mentee. The day will end with a boxed lunch. The matched pair then make as little or as much as they like out of the connection, with the idea that the mentor can give non-judgmental and ungraded advice to the teacher-to-be.

The program has drawn rave reviews from those who participate. If you think you might be interested, contact Rebecca Smith at 1-800-742-0047, or via email at:

rebecca.smith@nsea.org

Make Your Vote Count

The General Election is Tuesday Nov. 8, and no matter your political preferences, it is important that you cast a ballot!

There are several dates and deadlines to be considered ahead of the election, particularly for those who are not yet registered to vote. These details come from Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale:

■ Mail-in voter registrations must be postmarked on or before Friday, Oct. 21.

■ Individuals may register in person at the local County Clerk/Election Commissioner's office by 6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 28.

■ Nebraskans may also request early voting ballots, and need not give any reason for the application. Eligible voters may apply for an early voting ballot by contacting the local county clerk or election

commissioner's office in person at the election office, via personal agent, by mail or by fax. An early voting app can be found on the Secretary of State's website.

■ The last day to request an Early Voting ballot to be mailed is Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 4 p.m. Early Voting ballots, whether personally delivered, delivered by agent, delivered by mail or other carriers, must arrive by the closing of the polls on Election Day (8 p.m. Central Time/7 p.m. Mountain).

■ The Monday before Election Day is the last day to cast an early voting ballot in person at the County Election Office.

■ If voting at your local polling station, each voter must cast his/her ballot at his/her assigned polling place. If you do not know the location of your polling place, contact your county clerk/election commissioner.

■ Whenever you register or re-register to vote, your county clerk/election commissioner will inform you of your polling place location. Your voting card informs you of your polling place and your voting districts.

■ Polls are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Central Time Zone and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Mountain Time Zone.

Call the Nebraska Secretary of State's Office Election Division toll free, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-888-727-0007, or in Lincoln, at 402-471-2555, to report problems.

— Renae Kelly, Editor
renaekelly@gmail.com

Oct. 1 Deadline for NEA Medical, Related Arts Liability Plan

For a little more than \$1 a month, nurses who teach or supervise in the medical arts area can obtain additional liability insurance through the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program Insurance.

For the annual fee of \$13 – a fee that has not changed since 2005 – the NEA plan offers nurses and other health educators and athletic trainers additional coverage for teaching and supervisory responsibilities.

The policy is available to both active and active part-time NSEA members and covers school nurses for:

- Rendering first-aid and regular nursing services as a part of the member's educational employment.

- Administration of oral prescription medicine to students, if advance written authorization has been provided.

In addition to nurses, eligible school employees include dental hygienists, occupational therapists or physical therapists. NSEA members who are athletic trainers may also purchase the additional coverage.

Interested NSEA members should send a letter requesting the coverage, along with a check for \$13, payable to NSEA, to: Megan Lyons, NSEA, 605 S. 14th St., Lincoln, NE 68508-2742. Be sure to indicate your occupation (school nurse). Also include your home and work telephone numbers.

Checks for the 2016-17 school year must be received by Oct. 1, 2016. Checks received after that date will provide coverage for the remaining months of the employment year.

For details, call NSEA at 1-800-742-0047.

Free Ag Sack Lunch Program Returns; Brings Ag Awareness to Fourth Grade

The seventh Ag Sack Lunch Program will again provide a free lunch to fourth graders in 2016-17, along with a presentation about the importance of agriculture.

Each year, hundreds of fourth-grade students come to Lincoln to tour the State Capitol as part of their curriculum. The Ag Sack Lunch Program uses these tours as an opportunity to present about the importance of agriculture to the economy, as well as what crops and livestock species are raised in Nebraska.

The program is available courtesy of the Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB), the Nebraska Pork Producers, the Nebraska Corn Board and the Nebraska Beef Council.

Reservations for the 2016-17 school year are limited to 5,000 students on a first-come, first-served basis. These spots fill up quickly, so teachers are urged to sign up as soon as possible, even if their State Capitol tour dates have not been finalized. Reservations

may also be placed online at:

agsacklunchprogram.com

The sack lunches, donated by the sponsors, consist of Nebraska-produced food items to help students appreciate where their food comes from. They also receive a card game called "Crazy Soybean," which includes ag facts, to take home to play with their families and friends.



As they eat, students hear a 20-minute presentation about the role agriculture plays in the state's economy. The presentations are given by "Ag Ambassadors" – students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln trained specifically to conduct these sessions.

Since 2010-11, nearly 30,000 students have participated in the program. For further information, call Karen Brokaw at 1-402-432-2299.

Have You Moved? Has Marriage Changed Your Name?

If so, you can update your NSEA membership information online.

Log on to the NSEA website and click on the 'Member Info' button on the left side of the screen. Then click on the 'For Members' link and look for the 'Member Update' icon, and follow directions. Keep your issue of The Voice near, as the mailing label includes your 10-digit membership number, used to access your information. The website is at:

www.nsea.org

Devon Hamner

Devon (Schulz) Hamner, 65, Grand Island, died July 4, 2016, after a battle against cancer.

A kindergarten teacher and longtime NSEA member, Hamner was a devoted reader who sent hundreds of "1,000 book kids" on to first grade. She was a contract writer for the National Council of Teachers of English "Read-Write-Think" website, crafting model lessons to be published for use by other teachers.

She was a member of the International Reading Association's Central Nebraska chapter, the Grand Island Education Association, the NSEA, and the NEA, attending Representative Assemblies. She was a member of First Presbyterian Church, serving as a Sunday School and Bible School teacher, Stephen Ministry leader, deacon, elder, and the first ever female President of the Corporation.

She was also a member of the Grand Island Area Retired School Personnel, NSEA-R, the Platte Valley Retired Education Association and PEO.

Survivors include husband Chuck, two sons, a daughter and their families.

Margaret Albin

Margaret Albin, a longtime teacher and NSEA member, died July 12. She was also a past member of NSEA-Retired.

Albin was born at rural Humboldt and lived there most of her life, teaching in country school before marrying husband Joseph in 1946. While teaching at Bratton, and later at Union, she earned a bachelor's degree at Peru State College in 1967, and began teaching at Pawnee City later that year. She taught until 1987, when she retired. She is survived by a son, two daughters, and their families.

Mark Pennell

A former Adams Central teacher died in July after a termite-damaged tree fell on him at Lake Minatare State Recreation Area near Scottsbluff.

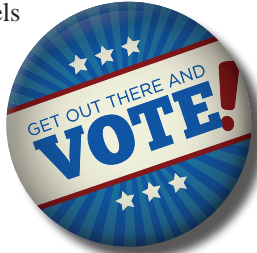
Mark Pennell, 44, died of his injuries. Pennell taught sixth grade at Juniata Elementary the past two years. He had resigned his teaching position at the end of the school year.

Pennell was one of three men struck when a tree snapped and fell on them, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Whatever You Do Nov. 8, Vote!

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 personally interviewed candidates about education issues and offer the recommendations shown here.



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

Here are 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 Bengston, 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
- Dist. 3:** Rachel Wise, Oakland

Speaking of Teaching

"Fifty years from now, it will not matter what kind of car you drove, what kind of house you lived in, how much you had in your bank account, or what your clothes looked like. But the world may be a little bit better because you were important in the life of a child."

— *Anonymous/Unknown*

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



Proud Association Members: As NSEA enters year 150, these educators at Lincoln's Culler Middle School put their NSEA room cards on prominent display for all to see. From left are MacKenzie Ashton, Liliya Martynyuk, Kim Rathe, Beckie Tuttle and Kailah Ward.

Snap a photo with your room card, or with a handful of colleagues and their room cards, and send a high-resolution version to NSEA at: al.koontz@nsea.org

Behavior Contracts

By Kristen Sayle, a second grade teacher at Perry Elementary School, Perry OH:

"One of my discipline tools is a daily behavior contract that is used for a few students who need a daily review of behavior. I designed a chart using Microsoft Word that breaks down the day into halves or thirds, depending on the student's behavioral needs.

"I created it on 1/4 of a sheet of paper so that four charts fit on one 8 1/2 x 11 sheet. I cut the charts, punch them in the corner, and then put them on a ring. I keep them in a basket on my desk. At the end of the day, call each child with a contract to my desk. We review their behavior and if they made good choices for each part of the day, I place a small sticker in the box according to the time of day that they made good choices.

"If they made a bad choice, we discuss it and I write a quick recap in the box about their behavior choices. The contracts are sent home daily for parents to review. It is quick and efficient. Students enjoy seeing the stickers. The teacher, students and parents get daily feedback. Some parents support the contract at home by granting privileges or taking them away according to the number of stickers they earn each day."

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

