



The Apple Corps

A publication of KNEA-Retired and KNEA



November 2025

President's Perspective



Dear Members,

What a fall it has been! Mostly lovely, warm weather, lots of sports to watch, and festive activities in which to participate! I hope you enjoyed Halloween — we had about 900 trick-or-treaters at our home in Pittsburg, which was a record number! Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays, since it revolves around good food and family! Hope you can take some time to relax and enjoy friends and loved ones.

Our retired KNEA members have been busy advocating for public education. In September, a number of our members spent two days at the Statehouse in Topeka at the Education Funding Task Force meeting. On Oct. 14, many attended the Joint Committee on Pensions, Investments and Benefits meeting to support and improve KPERS pensions. When the call goes out, retirees are at the Capitol building! We hope to have a table there during the legislative session to promote public education.

On Nov. 1, several of our members attended the KNEA Summit, sponsored by the Racial and Social Justice Committee. Rebecca Schultz, a member of our Coordinating Council, presented at a session on Ableism. Thank you for your advocacy!

Our KPERS COLA Squad, composed of Ruthe Goff, Chris Huntsman and Shelley Dunham, is available to speak to your local association or perhaps a combined meeting with Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel (KARSP) to raise awareness. Contact Ruthe at ruthe.goff.forkansas@gmail.com.

The first Pre-Retirement Seminar hosted by KNEA-R was on Nov. 8 on KPERS I and II. Thank you to Tom Schwartz for setting up these meetings and to staff member Robin Bonsall for helping me get this first Zoom in place.

We continue to work on membership and recruitment of new members. Our membership chair, Kathy Meyer, collaborated with some dedicated members to get mailings out for recently retired teachers with a certificate of appreciation and a KNEA-R membership form. Thank you! If you know of anyone who would like to join us, please contact Kathy at katmey@swbell.net. Let us know how we can help you! Have a wonderful holiday season!

Best regards,
Sherry Turnbull, KNEA-R President
Sherry.Turnbull@knea.org

Meet your KNEA-R Committee Chairs



I'm Kathy Meyer, and I serve KNEA-R as the Membership Chair. I'd like to introduce myself as an educator for more 36 years. I also served as President of Olathe NEA for five years. My experiences with KNEA encouraged me to join KNEA-R as a pre-retired lifetime member. This saved me money and took one thing off my plate upon retirement. I stay involved with local Sunflower East and Sunflower West, KNEA-R groups. I have been elected to be a delegate at multiple state and national Representative Assemblies and continue to work to increase membership in our association.

In my free time, I like to travel, do yardwork, read, and gather with other retirees for lunches and activities. I also stay busy working elections and to get pro-public education candidates elected. If you need more information about retired membership, check out the KNEA website (knea.org) and encourage other retirees to join online.

Questions? Contact me at katmey@swbell.net.



Hi! I am Shelia Blume, KNEA-R Communications Chair. I taught for 40 years, 22 years in Kensington and 18 years in Kansas City, Kansas. I was fortunate to be a school librarian in Kansas City and the English /school librarian instructor in Kensington. BEST job in the school!!

KNEA has always been part of my teaching service. George (my husband) and I were lucky to do our part as the district members and officers. We have two daughters and the oldest daughter has two grown boys. Since both George and I are only children, that is the family that comes together to celebrate when we can all be in the same place!

Keep sending me those articles for the Apple Corps. It is your publication, and we want it to reflect what you like to read about your organization. I appreciate all of you!



Howdy, fellow KNEA-R members, I am Susan Reusser! I am your newly appointed KPAC Representative for KNEA-Retired. My slightly southern drawl comes from being born and raised in Blackwell, Oklahoma. I was educated in Oklahoma and received licensure in all areas of Special Education, K-12. I taught in Ponca City, Jenks and Seminole, Oklahoma for 17 years. During those years, we welcomed our two children. Our family moved to Andover in 1993 and all areas of my Oklahoma licensure transferred to Kansas without question. I taught for the then-Butler County SPED Cooperative in El Dorado Schools, as well as Andover Schools for 18 years.

I have been an active member of NEA since joining the Oklahoma Student Program in 1974. I have been elected and appointed to positions from building rep to President, in both local, UniServ

and Oklahoma Education Association (OEA), then KNEA organizations. As a delegate, I have attended OEA and KNEA Representative Assemblies, NEA Western States Conference and the NEA RA. After retiring in 2014, I continued my advocacy for public education and educators by being a lifetime retired NEA and KNEA member. I have been President of Heartland Retired Educators. I continue to actively lobby our local, state and national elected leaders through personal contact, KNEA-R and Women for Kansas.

My other passion, no less important, are our two grandchildren, ages 3 and 5. I claim keeping up with them as my regular exercise and heartfelt joy!

We, as retired educators, have powerful voices and must not be silent. Recently, a significant number of KNEA-R members attended the Kansas Joint Committee Pensions, Investments and Benefits hearing in Topeka. Sens. Pat Pettey and Marcie Francisco made a point to approach several of us to thank us for being there, saying it made a difference. I am dedicated to representing KNEA-R to ensure that we have elected officials who will listen.

KNEA-R Delegates

Congratulations to our newly elected KNEA-Retired delegates to the KNEA-RA, which will be April 10-12 in Wichita:

- Judy Johnson
- Donna Adams-Zimmerman
- Alyce Edwards
- Sheila Blume
- Susan Reusser
- John Hope
- Kathy Meyer
- Amy Jensen

Alternates

- George Blume
- Roberta "Bert" Lewis
- Leigh Anne Rogers

They will be joined by Sherry Turnbull, President and Ruthe Goff, Board of Directors Representative. Thank you all for giving of your time and energy to do this important work!



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Calling Retirees!

KNEA-R wants to grow local chapters!

Do you live near Junction City/Manhattan or in Southeast or Southwest Kansas? Want camaraderie with other retired educators? Lunch? Miss field trips? Want to know about the challenges today's teachers face? And how to ask our legislators to support public education? Would you be willing to make a few contacts to get a local group started? If so, please contact Vice-President Judy Johnson, jjohnson6869@gmail.com.

Heartland Retired Educators

The fall meeting of Heartland Retired Educators (HRE) was Sept. 25 at Pine Valley Christian Church in Wichita. During coffee time before the business meeting, members gathered to chat and catch up with each other.



Amy Jensen, a current KNEA-R and HRE member, spoke about her candidacy for the Wichita USD 259 School Board. She delineated her district area and encouraged all to get out and vote. Congratulations, Amy, for winning your seat!

Next, we discussed our previous field trip to the local PBS station, KPTS, and members' concern about federal funding cuts. PBS contributes wonderful educational programming, as well as sponsoring the PBS Kansas Cochener-Garvey Children's Education & Discovery Center in Wichita. A motion to donate \$100 to KPTS was passed.

The 2025-2026 business meetings were discussed and set for Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, and Thursday, May 21, 2026, at Pine Valley Christian Church, 5620 E. 21st St. in Wichita.

The Spring Field Trip was discussed, and members voted to have President Scott Pittman investigate the possibility of visiting Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He will gather information and share at our HRE winter meeting.



NDGA National Glass Museum

Susan Reusser and Amy Jensen gave the Coordinating Council report from Sept. 23. Along with John Hope, they commended retiree attendance at the Kansas Legislature's School Funding Task Force Hearings in September 2025. HRE members who attended the KS Legislature's Joint Pension, Investments and Benefits hearing on October 14 were Sally Renoux, Amy Jensen, Paula Shields, John Hope and Susan Reusser. KNEA-R was well represented by members across Kansas. Note: There has not been a KPERs COLA since 1997.

On Oct. 16, our Fall HRE Field Trip headed to Wellington. Members toured National Depression Glass Association (NDGA) National Glass Museum. This museum is dedicated to preserving the history and products of the U.S. glass industry, with special

emphasis on the glass of three decades centered on the Great Depression.

After lunch at Fabiola's Authentic Mexican Restaurant, our group arrived at the Chisholm Trail Museum. This museum is home to 20,000 artifacts from Kansas pioneer days!



Chisholm Trail Museum

Heartland Retired Educators invite all retired KNEA-R teachers in our area to join us for future meetings and field trips!

Northwest Kansas Prairie Winds Retired Educators

On Sept. 9, the Northwest Kansas Prairie Winds Retired Educators met in WaKeeney to tour a former nursing home that has been turned into a hotel with covered wagons for rooms. Six retired teachers from WaKeeney joined us and were encouraged to join the group.

A report on the Cottonwood UniServ Board meeting included a decreasing membership and the need to stick to the budget.

There was a SOUPer PAC event on Nov. 15 in Hays. Area legislators were invited and everyone was encouraged to attend. Changes to the bylaws were approved, including splitting the secretary/treasurer position into two separate positions. Dates and potential topics for the meetings in 2026 were discussed. It was suggested that we need to be aware of the mobility of our members when selecting activities and locations. The first meeting will be on April 14 in Hays. The current officers were reelected.

Mary Porterfield, Secretary

Prairie Grass Retired Educators

Prairie Grass will be having our annual Christmas social on Dec. 12 at Roma's, an Italian restaurant in Hutchinson. We will all bring a Christmas ornament/decoration for a gift exchange, which will be made into a game. This year, the roll of the dice will tell us how to pass the gifts. It's always nice to spend time together and just have fun!

Capital Area Retired Educators (CARE)

The following programs were selected:

October — History of Native American Tribes in Shawnee County (adjusted this a bit, speaker was Dennis Rogers, a Native American who spoke about his experiences).

November — Kansas Women Authors (changed to Dr. Craig Yorke, Topeka — has written a memoir, "Steep," about his experiences as a Black neurosurgeon in the Midwest).

December — Tour of Immaculata Church, St. Marys.

January — Kansas Museum of History Tour.

February — Regular meeting.

March — March 17 Support Our Public Schools Day at the Capitol.

April — Full Circle Sustainability Tour, 10 a.m., Stout Elementary.

May — Regular meeting.

June — Crow B Bison Tour, Holton TBD.

July — Put together Christmas tree.

August— Breakfast TBD.

Volunteer Activities

Library Booktique — Members continue to volunteer at the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library.

Future Now Finance needs volunteers:

Sept. 24-25 — Highland Park HS.

Oct. 29-30 — Topeka West HS.

Nov. 5-6 —Topeka HS.

KTWU

End of October, mailing.

November into December drive after Thanksgiving.

Third week of January, 2026, envelope stuffing.

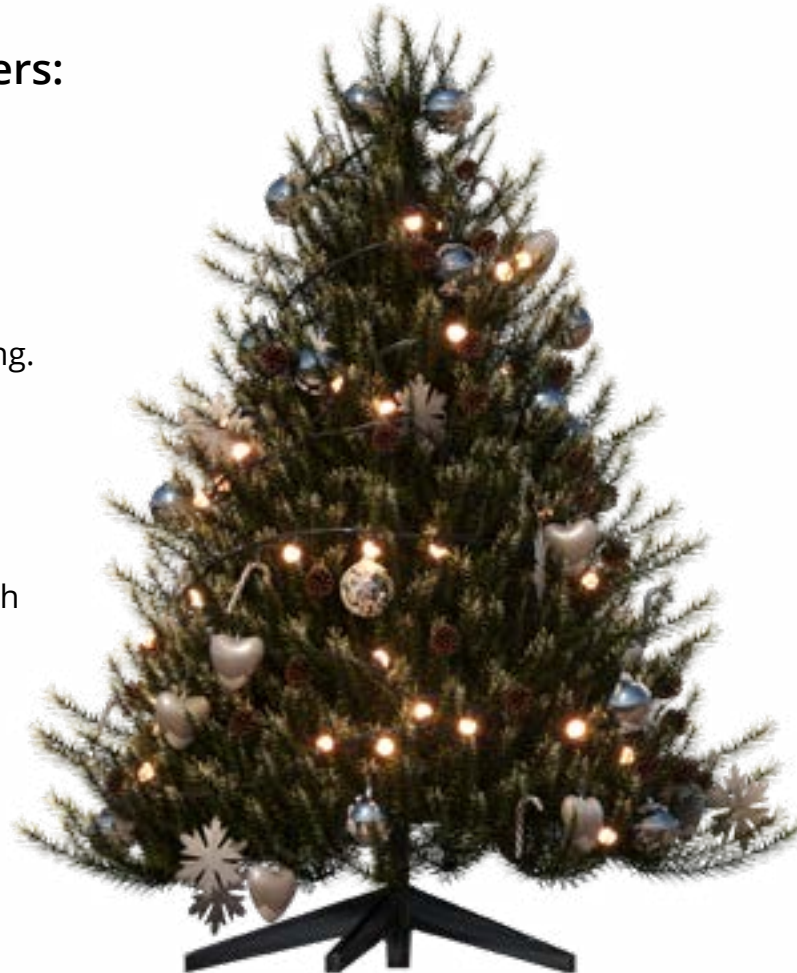
February into mid-March.

Beginning of June, after Memorial Day.

Sheltered Living Institute (SLI)

To volunteer for Festival of Trees, Nov. 21 through Dec. 7, Fairlawn Plaza.

Visit: www.slitopeka.org/festival.



Coordinating Council members shared some of their most memorable holiday foods:

"I am an Italian by birth and food! But of all the things that appeared at holiday gatherings when I was growing up, my favorite are thin sugar cookies. I love to put different colored sugars on them." — Shelia Blume

"I love all the things for Thanksgiving — turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, veggies and, of course, pumpkin and pecan pies." — Kathy Meyer

"Potica!!! Grinding walnuts into a fine paste and adding a touch of lemon, rolling sweet dough paper thin and lathering it with the paste. Mom (with my somewhat incompetent help) would work all day for two loaves of the fabulous Christmas pastry. I taste and smell it as I type this." — Judy Johnson

"My favorite holiday foods would be cranberry sauce, made from the recipe on the Ocean Spray bag of cranberries. I also love the tried and true, 50-plus year old Jell-O pecan pie recipe my mom used. It's quick and easy, and not as sweet as most recipes. If someone wants it, they can email me at marymasters58@gmail.com." — Mary Masters

"My favorite holiday food is the traditional salad made with lime Jell-O, cottage cheese, pineapple and whipped topping. I remember it being served at every holiday meal since my childhood and continue to serve it at our holiday meals." — Carolyn May

"Hi! My favorite holiday foods — red velvet cake, baked ham and scalloped potatoes." — Alicia Rues

"Pumpkin bars, cheesecake with cherry sauce, etc." — Joyce Tallman

"Butter cookies from my grandmother's recipe! Roll the dough, cut-out holiday shapes, and decorate with green and red icing — best done with grandkids!" — Sherry Turnbull

For our next issue, we invite you to give a brief response to this question: What are you doing to beat the cold and winter blahs?

Email by Jan. 9 to Shelia Blume: booklady13492@gmail.com



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Reflections on KNEA Racial and Social Justice Summit

By Ruthe Goff

If you were unable to attend the KNEA Racial and Social Justice Summit, please consider putting future summits on your calendar when they are announced. This was my first time attending, and it will not be my last! Gladys Márquez, a high school bilingual English Language Learners Educator and NEA Executive Committee member gave a keynote address to begin the day.



Sessions were led by KNEA and NEA leaders and staff, as well as experts in related areas. With over 20 sessions to choose from, it was a powerful day. Rebecca Shultz, KNEA Retired Special Education teacher, gave a presentation titled, "From Harm to Healing: Rethinking Ability," which addresses the question, "What is ableism?" KNEA retirees Jim Armendariz and Alyce Edwards also attended, and I urge you to visit with them to hear about their experience.

I was asked to be a room monitor and, as such, I attended the following sessions:

- "Shifting Pedagogy: Aesthetic vs. Impactful"
- "The Compassionate Classroom: The Brain and Learning in Action"
- "Beyond Basics: Advanced Restorative Circles in Action"
- "Struggles and Support for LGBTQIA Staff and Students"

"Fight Back, Fight Forward: Promote, Protect and Strengthen Kansas Public Education" was the theme of the summit. If you see a member wearing a T-shirt with this message, you will know they attended the summit. #KNEAJUSTICE

Report of Coordinating Council Meeting

by Judy Johnson

When President Sherry Turnbull opened the fall KNEA-Retired Coordinating Council (CC) meeting, she was greeted by a plethora of smiling new, but "old", familiar faces. For the first time in several years, all 15 UniServ Districts in the state have a retired representative on KNEA-R's CC to serve on its governing body and act as an unofficial liaison between active members and retired.

Ruthe Goff, our retired representative on the KNEA Board of Directors, and Judy Johnson, KNEA-R Vice

President, kicked off the meeting with a silent auction to benefit the NEA Jack Kinnaman Scholarship fund. The variety of items, donated by meeting attendees, had everyone bidding (and outbidding) on their favorites. The auction netted \$511 for the fund! In the past several years, multiple Kansas Aspiring Educators have been recipients of the \$3500 scholarship. You'll find information about how you can make a tax-deductible donation from the comfort of your recliner in this newsletter. Look for the QR code.



Business for the meeting was varied. President Turnbull reviewed the recently updated by-laws and discussed the role and responsibilities of the Coordinating Council members. Jim Armendariz was appointed to serve on KNEA's Racial Justice Commission and Robert Hubbard to the Social Justice Commission. Both the Manhattan area and Garden City/Dodge City area needs to have a local retired chapter in order to better serve members. Ideas were discussed, and some interested persons have been contacted. The Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees (KCPR), of which KNEA-R is a part, has been working tirelessly advocating for a KPERS Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). KCPR is in need of a website update. KNEA-R voted unanimously to donate \$200 to KCPR for that purpose.

KNEA President Sherri Schwanz dropped by to welcome the council and Chris Huntsman, newly elected KPERS trustee, gave a brief overview of her responsibilities and recent activities. KNEA's new communications team, Director Ann Bush and Administrative Assistant Makenzie Cochran-Dockerty, shared their plans for making KNEA more visible. They are quite a dynamic duo! Kevin Scarrow, KNEA Associate Director, along with the expertise of AA Carrie Pflumm, provided training to CC members on NEA's MyNEA360 communication platform. This platform is used for document sharing, member-to-member groups, and as an option from paper files.

Interspersed with all of the above, the council also heard reports from our staff liaison and Governmental Relations Director Timothy Graham. He continues his year-round work building relationships and guiding KNEA's legislative focus. Sherry Turnbull gave her president's report, Mary Masters reviewed the treasurer's report, and Ruthe Goff spoke of the board's recent activities and business. Committee chairs also reported.

The meeting was packed with information and sharing. Your Coordinating Council members represented you well. This is the beginning of a year filled with energy and possibility. New and "old" are a great combination.

Thank you to our Staff Liaison, Timothy Graham, and our Administrative Assistant, Robin Bonsall, for supporting KNEA-Retired.

KNEA Board of Directors Report



By Ruthe Goff

Welcome to Fall Highlights from the in-person Oct. 4, 2025, KNEA board of directors meeting (BOD).

- Consent agenda items listed in the agenda were approved. Appointments, resignations to committees, ratification of No Raid Agreement, recommendation of Sharice Davids CD3 to NEA PAC and update 2025 NBI 22 Task Force were voted on and passed.
- Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Audit was presented. Audit of policies and procedures show the organization is prepared and in good order.
- KNEA Secretary-Treasurer gave a report on the July 2025 and August

2025 Financials. Discussion and questions followed.

- KNEA Strategic Planning Overview was presented. Board members engaged in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Board Members engaged in activity discussing the Central Role of a BOD Member, what should KNEA start, continue or stop doing. Board members shared suggestions from members, as this was "Board Homework."
- First Reading of the following: KNEA Policy XIII Member Names and Addresses; KNEA Policy XIV Membership; KNEA new Policy VI Document Retention; KNEA Policy XIX 2025-2026 KNEA Bylaw 3-1(g) Implementation Plan; KNEA Policy XX Kansas NEA Affirmation Action Plan; KNEA Policy XXII Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedure. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedure. An explanation was shared that the language is mirrored to NEA language.
- Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report met via Zoom. A request was made to add future in-person meetings. Discussion was held. The Board approved in-person meetings for this committee with funding from the legal budget line.
- Resolutions Commission Report overview was presented. The Board will discuss at the December Board meeting.
- Reports were given by the Racial and Social Justice representative.
- An update was given on the 2025 new business items (NBIs).
- Ann Bush, Communications Director, gave an update.
- A report from KNEA-Retired board member was shared. KNEA will make a contribution to Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees.
- Report on two Strategic Grants was given, one to Hays NEA and one to Hutchinson NEA.

As always, for more details, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Ruthe Goff, KNEA-Retired Board Representative at Ruthe.goff.forkansas@gmail.com.



Thanks to all retired members who attended the Joint Committee on Pensions, Investments and Benefits on Oct. 14. We heard promising discussions on KPERs. The work is not over! Follow ksretirees.org to help us continue to advocate for a KPERs Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).



KNEA-R had its Coordinating Council meeting in September. Several retired members also joined a legislative luncheon in August. Finally, retired members spent the day at the KNEA Racial and Social Justice Summit.



Photos



Members spoke during the Coordinated Council meeting in September. Prairie Grass Retired Educators also had a business meeting, and CARE members held a planning session. Both Sherri and Sherry were hard at work. Sunflower West met with guest speaker Timothy Graham, KNEA Governmental Relations and Retired Staff Liaison. ECKRE Local Chapter had a field trip to Ottawa, KS.

