

NSEA-RETIRED ADVOCATE

www.nsea.org/retired

June 2022

Volume 17, Issue 3

NSEA-RETIRED OFFICERS

Dr. De Tonack,
NSEA-Retired
President
dtonack@neb.rr.com



Roger Rea, Vice President
roger.omaha@gmail.com

Dr. Sarah Brown, Secretary
travelersarah@hotmail.com

Arlene Rea, Treasurer
arlenerea36@yahoo.com

DISTRICT DIRECTORS

Pat Etherton, Capitol
petherton123@gmail.com

Dr. Margie Nowak, Capitol
margienowak@hotmail.com

Tom Black, Elkhorn
wpc6296@cableone.net

Ruby Davis, Metro
rddelta@gmail.com

Walta Sue Dodd, Metro
wsdodd@aol.com

Twila Griffiths, Panhandle
egriff@mail.com

Maureen Nickels, Sandhills
earth1@rocketmail.com

Guy Roggenkamp, Tri-Valley
groggenk@charter.net

If you are not receiving emails from the NSEA-Retired list or your email address has changed, send a message to dtonack@neb.rr.com.

Behind-the-scenes fun at the spring conference

NSEA-Retired President Dr. De Tonack welcomed more than 130 participants and guests to the annual Spring Conference in Lincoln.

Held in April, the conference featured behind-the-scenes education and fun at the Lincoln Children's Zoo.

Zoo President Emeritus John Chapo shared the history of the Lincoln Zoo and the history of zoos around the world.

Lincoln's zoo is home to more than 400 animals with 40 classified as endangered species, including the Sumatran tiger and Matschie's tree kangaroo. The zoo has undergone several additions in recent years and has expanded its reach in the Lincoln community by hosting events throughout the year, including a winter attraction in December called, "Zoo Lights Powered by LES."

Chapo told attendees about the Zoo's environmental travel experiences for youth, zoo camps and fundraising events for adults.

Conference participants also visited with zoo staff about the care and

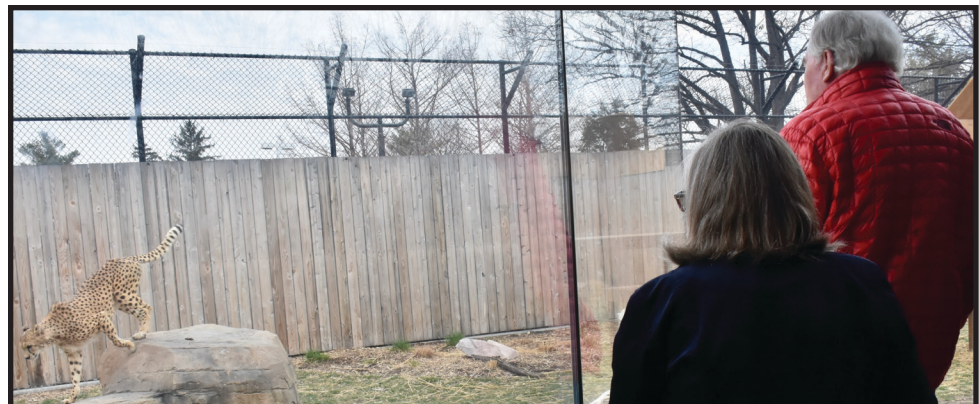


breeding of animals. The fun included one participant literally butting heads with a giraffe while feeding it lettuce. No giraffes or retirees were harmed!

Several participants were able to watch the cheetah chase an object at 130 mph in its area.



Kim Clabaugh, Rose and Gene Wissenberg feed lettuce to a giraffe.



Participants were able to watch the cheetah chase an object at 130 mph. The unique area provides an up-close opportunity to watch cheetahs do what they do best - run!

"Teachers Fountain" restoration makes progress

The \$1.6 million campaign to restore Cascade Fountain is complete! Known as "Teachers Fountain," the fountain was built in 1978 to commemorate the nation's Bicentennial and to honor Nebraska educators for their dedication and commitment to provide excellence in education.

The project was a collaboration of the Lincoln Area Retired School Personnel and the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department. The fountain is dedicated to Nebraska's retired teachers.

Over the years, the condition of the fountain deteriorated. The fountain and plaza renovation took 18 months. Maggie Stuckey Ross, Lincoln Parks Foundation, and volunteer Susan Larson Rodenburg provided NSEA Retired Spring Conference attendees an update on the redevelopment.

The plaza is located just north of the Lincoln Children's Zoo at South 27th and Capitol Parkway. Fundraising for the renovation included purchasing bricks to commemorate favorite educators. The new plaza area boasts 459 bricks purchased to honor educators.

NSEA-Retired contributed to the project and will be recognized with a plaque at the site.



Top: Maggie Stuckey Ross, Lincoln Parks Foundation, and volunteer Susan Larson Rodenburg gave an update on the redevelopment of the Bicentennial Cascade Fountain. **Center:** Lincoln Education Association Retired donated to the project. **Left:** Jamee Schurman kneels by a brick donated in her honor.



"Crop Art: Process and Politics" by Art Tanderup

NSEA-Retired member Art Tanderup, Neligh, provided conference attendees a presentation on the "Politics & Process of Crop Art." Tanderup has traveled to many states to help design, plow and cut environmental and political crop images. Crop art is viewable from the sky.

Several crop images have been featured in previous NSEA-Retired newsletters as well as the national NEA Today magazine.

Crop Art Facts:

- It takes about a week to create a piece of crop art.
- Crop art is a great way to engage a community.
- Crop art can send a political message and stimulate activism.

Spring conference features authors, prizes

Spring conference speaker Matthew Hansen, editor of the Flatwater Free Press, shared excerpts from his and his wife Sarah's book "The Better Half: Nebraska's Hidden Treasures."

Attendees heard about many restaurant and visual offerings in the small towns of Nebraska. The authors describe the book as "Our Love Letters to Nebraska."

"After surviving months and several thousands of miles together in a car, what did surprise this married couple were the unintended adventures. We kept bumping into little moments that we will remember long after the pages of this book have faded. The reader may explore a country setting in Crawford, an astronomy experience in Valentine or a good place to dine in a restaurant close to Wilcox," wrote the authors.

A copy of the book was presented as a prize drawing at the event. By the end of Hansen's presentation at least one



Hansen



Hoffmann

NSEA-Retired participant was planning on an evening meal in Dodge, a place recommended in the book.

The afternoon also included comments from visiting NEA-Retired Director Bob Hoffmann from South Dakota. He compared the successes of NSEA Retired with the successes of the South Dakota Retired Association, including the good retirement pensions both associations have achieved.

Drawing prizes at the end of the conference included stuffed animals from the zoo gift shop.

Drawing winners included Deb Gnuse and Yvette Engelhaupt from the Platte Valley Retired Association and Lincoln members Margie and Bill Nowak.

After the conference, many attendees stayed and visited the rest of the zoo site and the Cascade Teachers' Fountain area to continue the fun.

Rebecca Smith with her husband, Mark.



Thank you, Rebecca!

NSEA-Retireds thanked Rebecca Smith for her years of service to the Association at the conference.

Smith, a 13-year NSEA employee, retired in January. Smith worked with the NSEA-Retired, EMAC, Professional Development and Wellness committees. She provided outstanding guidance to many past and current NSEA field staff members and enjoyed working with NSEA members from across the state.

NSEA-Retired President De Tonack said Smith was an important part of arranging NSEA-Retired conferences and election ballots.

"We thank Rebecca for her work. She kept NSEA-Retired on the right track," Tonack said.

NSEA-Retired members presented Smith with a special blanket for her service.

"It was a profound privilege serving the Retired Association during my 13 years as NSEA associate staff. I loved being a part of the NSEA mission and was delighted to find our retired members never really retired from engaging in that same public education mission," Smith said. "Both Mark and I owe a debt of gratitude to Nebraska's retired members for including us like their own. I will wrap myself in this blanket as if I am being hugged by all the NSEA-Retired members. Use your talents wherever you land in this life and never stop learning and looking for opportunities to share what you have learned."



Front row, left to right: Deb Gnuse and Yvette Engelhaupt from the Platte Valley Retired Association; back row, Lincoln members Margie and Bill Nowak.



NSEA-Retired members from left to right: Bill Nowak, Linda Splichal, Joe Shandera and Pat Etherton explore Robber's Cave in Lincoln.

Retirees explore a Lincoln landmark: Robber's Cave

NSEA-Retired hosted several retirement parties throughout the state this spring. With the assistance of an NEA-Retired grant, Lincoln Education Association-Retired hosted an event at Robber's Cave in Lincoln. Attendees were treated to a tour of the historic cave which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2020.

The cave is older than the city of Lincoln. The man-made tunnels have a history that can be traced back to the Osage Nation—a Midwestern Native American tribe of

the Great Plains. Native Americans used the tunnels for hunting. In the 1700s, the site was an object of French exploration.

The cave was also used as a hiding place for Civil War deserters and outlaws — including the Youngers and Dalton gangs. The expansive site offers more than 5,000 square feet of sandstone tunnels to explore.

Retired guests took part in the tour as part of the Lincoln area retirement party on April 28.



'Thank You' served with a side of M&Ms

Arnold Elementary retirees Jamee Schurman, Kathy Wilson, MayDene Juhnke, Stephanie Nantkes, Janet Goracke and Marianne Pasho posed for a photo during the Lincoln retirement celebration at Robber's Cave.

Each retiree received a sweet treat



from NSEA-Retired.

The individual jars of M&Ms were labeled "Retirement Vitamins."

A thank you note from NSEA-Retired attached to each jar read, "Never underestimate the difference you have made and the lives you have touched. Happy Retirement."

Distinguished Educator Award



Metro Retired Board member Walta Sue Dodd is shown with Tracy Weatherly, a teacher at Joslyn Elementary School, who was honored with the Distinguished Educator Award at the 58th Annual Laurels Night hosted by the Omaha Education Association.

Tracy was an OEA Board member and is an OEA pre-retired lifetime member who is retiring this year.



New retiree Shellie Meyer receives a gift bag from Grand Island Education Association president Michelle Carter and host Karma Lewandowski.

New retirees celebrated statewide

Grand Island Education Association (GIEA) and Platte Valley Retired Association co-hosted an event May 11 in Grand Island to welcome new retirees, acknowledge long-time educators, and to award various scholarships.

New retirees received gift bags from GIEA President Michelle Carter and Karma Lewandowski, a Grand Island educator and event host.

During the GIEA retirement celebration NSEA-Retired held two drawings. The winner of one free annual membership went to Kelli Eriksen, Grand Island Education Association.

One lucky drawing winner took home the book entitled "The Better Half: Nebraska's Hidden Treasures" by Matthew and Sarah Baker Hansen.

The Platte Valley Retired Association's recent meeting included a tour

of the Career Pathways Institute in Grand Island. The Institute is one of the academies at the Grand Island Public School District. The purpose of

the Institute is to focus on workforce development and career preparation that would lead to either achieving a secondary education degree or an industrial certification.

Members toured two academies on the campus, Technical Sciences and Engineering and



Craig Barfknecht standing on the left, Jan Barnason at controls and the flight instructor Daniel Phillips shown on the right.

Technology.

Platte Valley Retired members Jan Barnason and Craig Barfknecht were "flying high" during their flight simulation at the spring meeting. Instructor Daniel Phillips was on hand to help guide Platte Valley Retired Association members through the simulation.

NSEA-RETIRED Membership Winners



Winner of a drawing for a free annual membership in NSEA-Retired and NEA-Retired was Kelli Eriksen.



Thanks to an anonymous donor, Marianne Pasho received a free annual membership to NEA, NSEA-Retired and the Lincoln Education Association-Retired.

Have an article idea for the *NSEA-Retired Advocate* or the *NSEA Voice* magazine? Send your idea to Dr. De Tonack at dtonack@neb.rr.com

Helping Teachers Teach

An editorial published last winter in the Lincoln Journal Star
from LEA-Retired member Paula Buckner

While watching the Olympics, an announcer compared the Olympic athletes' energy to compete in their event to a box of matches. The announcer said each athlete has to determine when to strike and when to burn their matches to maintain their stamina. If they strike their matches too soon, or use up all the matches in their box, that athlete will burnout.

Our teachers in Lincoln Public School parallel this Olympic matchbox analogy. Our teachers are experiencing severe burnout. According to the National Education Association, 55% of our teachers and support staff are considering leaving the profession. The National Foundation for Educational Research states that 1 in 5 teachers feels tense about their job all or most of the time, compared with 1 in 8 workers in similar professions. Research from CNN has found that teachers make more minute-by-minute decisions than brain surgeons.

Teacher fatigue/burnout includes not enough time to adequately plan quality education for their own students and classroom because they are covering other classrooms for staff who are sick, have COVID-19 or are in quarantine. Teachers are also being asked to cover para-educator positions. Teachers work overtime to meet their own classroom needs and are forced, with little prep-time, to teach another class/subject area they are not proficient in.

The pandemic has intensified the fatigue/burnout teachers experience. Teachers fear contracting COVID-19 or being placed in quarantine. Most non-educators don't understand that even though a teacher is home sick, they are still required to write and provide lesson plans, activities, and materials for a substitute teacher. Teachers don't get a free day off. Also, teachers are expected to enforce pandemic protocols which pose additional challenges. For students who are at home sick, have COVID-19, or are traveling, teachers are required to collect and send homework to keep students up to date and aligned with curriculum standards.

Student behavior/discipline issues continue to increase teacher fatigue/burnout. Teachers need support and guidelines that are followed through by the administration from each building to the district office. Teachers need support on behavior/discipline issues from parents/guardians and the community.

Teacher pay is low. For teachers who are seeking a masters or doctorate degree, add hefty student loan payments. Teachers are not paid for holidays/vacation days, including summers, when schools/classes are not in session. Many teachers work overtime daily, weekends, and during holiday/vacation days because every one of their students deserve a caring, qualified, committed educator in their classroom. The non-paid overtime contributes to teacher fatigue/burnout.

The threat of school shootings adds anxiety

to teachers' fatigue/burnout. Picture teachers huddled with 30 plus students in an assigned lockdown space; lights off, trying to keep students quiet and still.

A survey of 1,000 teachers conducted by the National Education Association found 60% surveyed worried that a mass shooting could happen at their school. While waiting for police response, teachers are taking account of alternate ways to leave the classroom, checking windows, and assessing vulnerabilities within their classroom. The Security

Entrance Monitors (SEM) stresses that staff should hesitate to buzz strangers through the front door.

Teachers who volunteer in curriculum, objective writing, and development of state standards is another example of what leads to teacher fatigue/burnout. This writing/development process is done after the school day is over, and/or, during the holiday/vacation days. Meeting state standards, testing standards, and navigating legislative requirements are a challenge.

The public can help

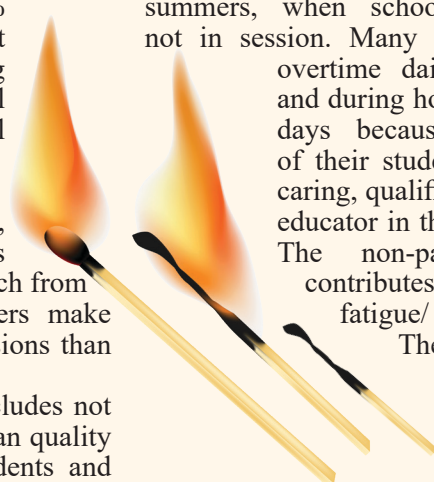
The perceived value of the teaching profession by society is critical in attracting, recruiting, and retaining high-quality teachers. Solutions to teacher shortages require action on the local and state level. Higher pay, better working conditions, more respect from students, parents/guardians, administrators, and the community would be a positive start.

How many matches do teachers have left in their matchbox? Every minute, teachers must determine when to strike their matches and when to burn their matches, to maintain their flame and stamina. If they strike their matches too

soon, or burn all the matches in their box, fatigue or burnout will be the result. Many teachers' matchboxes are approaching empty.

The Lincoln Education Association-Retired Board members encourage any kindness and encouragement you can provide our teachers.

An outpouring of care and support would mean the world coming from students, parents/guardians, administration, and community, and would give our teachers a much-needed boost. Teachers need to keep their matches lit and not burnout.



"How many matches do teachers have left in their matchbox? Every minute, teachers must determine when to strike their matches and when to burn their matches, to maintain their flame and stamina. If they strike their matches too soon, or burn all the matches in their box, fatigue or burnout will be the result."

— Paula Buckner

Making Decisions and Planning Direction



NSEA-Retired delegates attend the 2022 Delegate Assembly held at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in April.



NSEA-Retired President Dr. De Tonack and Lincoln Retired member Sheri Paden are shown welcoming retired delegates to the 2022 Delegate Assembly in Lincoln.

Retired delegates back in-person

The 2022 Delegate Assembly brought more than 200 educators together in Lincoln for the first in-person DA in two years. The pandemic led delegates to meet virtually in 2020 and 2021. Delegates approved four New Business Items, elected new leaders and passed one new Bylaw. Complete coverage of the Assembly was published in the May edition of *The Voice*.

Retired Delegates at the April Delegate Assembly are shown above. **Front left to right:** Pat Etherton, Walta Sue Dodd, Guy Roggenkamp, Dan Schiefelbein, De Tonack, Chris Martin, Maureen Nickels, and Doreen Jankovich. Back row from left to right: Ruby Davis, Arlene Rea, Tom Black, Roger Rea, Liz Rea, Jan Barnason, Art Tanderup, Susan Kalina, Sarah Brown, and Joy Brown.

Thank you!

A special thank you to the following NSEA staff in helping NSEA-Retired President Dr. De Tonack count retired ballots in March: Sheri Jablonski, Jaylynn Schubauer, Samantha Vrbka, Michelle Raphael, Becky Scherbring, Kami Beaty, Martha Livingston, Tamra Mick, and Mike Wiesen.

Sarah Brown and Arlene Rea were elected to the secretary and treasurer positions respectively. Elected NSEA-Retired Board of Directors are Joy Brown-Panhandle, Jan Barnason-TriValley, and Walta Sue Dodd-Metro.

Leadership gathers at NEA-Retired Baltimore Conference

NSEA-Retired members Guy Roggenkamp and Deb Gnuse of Grand Island, Chris Martin, Margie Nowak and Arlene Rea of Lincoln, and Roger Rea from Omaha attended the 2022 NEA-Retired Conference in Baltimore, MD, March 16 – 18, 2022. The theme was “Uniting for a Better Future for Our Students, Our Educators and Our Communities—Retired Ready for Action.”

After the conference, attendees shared ideas they learned that could be implemented to fulfill the purpose of increasing membership and locals. The ideas include:

Lobbying: Brand ourselves when we lobby and attend events. The branding should be visible and memorable—same color, clothing, etc.

When lobbying, each person should



From left to right: Guy Roggenkamp, Chris Martin, NEA Retired President Sarah Borgman, Deb Gnuse and Margie Nowak.

have a two-minute speech prepared so our message is succinct and to the point.

After lobbying, send a personal note (preferably by paper or e-mail) to the senator and/or anyone else who was visited. Follow up with an e-mail at least once a month with different

items that are of interest to NSEA-Retired members. We don't want to appear to talk to them only when we want something, but instead be the “go-to” person when they have a question.

Mental Health: Remind members “We are all doing the best we can with what we have and what we know.” Also, that “Sharing thankful thoughts with others adds joy to all.”

Noel Candelaria, NEA Secretary Treasurer, reminded us that “Diamonds are forever! So are teachers.”

Racial and social justice: We must be mindful of the backgrounds of the many different students and staff we meet, serve and work with every day. We must strategically understand and promote justice for all. There are several state models we could emulate.

Mark your calendar!

Plan to attend the NSEA-Retired Fall Conference Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at the Ramada Inn in Grand Island.

Join NSEA-Retired members and enjoy music, information on travel, insurance, volunteerism and cyber security.

See you there!



Former LEA President Rita Bennett with Pat Etherton.

Raffle to benefit the NSEA Children's Fund

NSEA-Retired is offering raffle tickets to raise funds for the NSEA Children's Fund.

Established in 1994, the Fund is available to NSEA members who might otherwise reach into their own pocket to buy a warm coat or a new pair of shoes for a student. The Fund also helps with more complex needs and works to ensure that the physical, social and emotional needs of students do not stand in the way of their success in school.

Raffle tickets may be purchased from Retired Board of Directors members and leaders throughout the state at numerous events.

A drawing for two winners will be held at the October 18 Fall Conference. Tickets are \$5 each or three for \$10. Donations are tax deductible. Maureen Nickels donated the queen size quilt; the baby quilt was donated by Gloria Boham, sister of Metro Retired Director Walta Sue Dodd.