

# Representative Assembly Planning Committee

**Marcia Benner, Lincoln, and Sean Nutzman, Milford, Co-Chairs**

California – here we come! From July 1-6, 2009, more than 100 delegates from Nebraska will be in San Diego for the NEA Representative Assembly.

In order to make the event a success for Nebraska's delegates, NSEA's RA Planning Committee starts meeting each September and continues to meet at almost every NSEA Board meeting throughout the year. The committee makes many decisions, sets up activities for the Nebraska delegation, and activities and events for new delegates. The committee gives delegates suggestions for what to wear each day, usually following a broad theme like California/tropical shirt day or Nebraska red day. For some of us, it helps cut down on over-packing.

This committee also organizes and holds an auction on each of the convention days. The money raised goes to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. The NEA urges that each state raise \$180 per delegate. If there is a fund-raising event at Delegate Assembly, please contribute what you can to help NSEA meet this goal and not have to tap just the funds of the 100 delegates in San Diego.

We network with all 50 states while we are at RA. We share positions on some business items, and we try to give teacher and/or Nebraska items to colleagues from other states, as well.

Many of us are up and ready for meetings at 6 a.m. each day, and we may not finish at the Convention Center until as late as 6 p.m. They can be long days filled with speakers, information and the conducting of NEA business. But that is what you elected us to do – the work of the Association at the national level. It is always a rewarding and interesting week. Thank you for your continued support!

In addition to the co-chairs, listed above, the 2009 committee members are Tracia Blom, South Sioux City; Rich Wergin, Seward; Mark Shively, Omaha; Broderick Steed, Umo<sup>n</sup> ho<sup>n</sup> Nation; Deb Wallman, Fremont; Jenni Absalon, Lincoln; Pam McGeary, Westside; Deb Freese, Norfolk; Carol Krejci, Omaha; Melissa Boutwell, Lexington; Jessica Brauer, Nebraska Wesleyan University; and NSEA staff members Joan Sparks and Julie Wolf.

Believe us when we say that we could not do this without the help of Joan Sparks and Julie Wolf. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

# Scholarships and Grants Committee

**Mary Ann Niemoth, Hastings, and Sean Nutzman, Milford, Co-Chairs**

In addition to the co-chairs, members of the committee are Dave Shrader, Verigre; Ken Rigler, Callaway; Deb Schild, Gering; Yvonne Goodman, Bellevue; and Gordon Peeks, North Platte.

The committee administers the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Professional Development Fund and the Belz-Lynch-Krause Educational Grant Fund as follows:

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska Professional Development Fund:** Since 1986, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska has provided financial aid to college-bound NSEA teachers and members who are covered by either a single or family Blue Cross/Blue Shield health care policy. Scholarships may be used by teachers to pursue an advanced degree; to seek an additional teaching endorsement; or to take course work to meet certification requirements. All courses must be taken for credit.

There are generally three application periods each year, to coincide with the end of spring, summer and fall college sessions. Interested association members must complete the official application form that appears on a regular basis in 'The Voice' or which can be downloaded from the NSEA Web site.

Each applicant may apply for scholarship dollars for no more than three hours of college course work during any session. Books and other supplies are not covered. Previous scholarship applicants, whether successful or not, are always eligible to re-apply. Applicants may be recipients of stipends during only two of the three scholarship cycles each school year.

The Scholarship Committee's continuing goal is to award stipends to the largest possible number of NSEA members from all six districts. The Committee follows set criteria in judging each application. Applicants need to follow directions completely when filling out the application form and typing the ONE page addendum. The committee will discard application forms that are not completely and accurately filled in. Additionally, each of the four criteria that **MUST** be contained in the one page attachment needs to be specific and will be screened carefully. Applicants need to check their work carefully to ensure an optimum consideration by the Committee for their request.

Stipend winners must present evidence of successful course work completion at an accredited post-secondary institution before they receive the grant money.

**Belz, Lynch, Krause Educational Grant Fund:** The grants are named for John Lynch, NSEA's executive director from 1959 to 1974; Paul Belz, who held that post from 1974-84; and Helen Krause, former NSEA president and Nebraska's first member of the NEA's Executive Committee. Eligible recipients of the Belz/Lynch/Krause Educational Grant Fund include NSEA members, groups of NSEA member or NSEA local associations.

Grant requests shall be related to improving a local association, development of instructional materials or to provide staff development for individuals of a local association. Applications must include a project abstract, not to exceed four typed pages, including the following information: need; how the project will address the need to relate to professional growth goals, a project description; time-line; a budget; and method of evaluating the project.

# Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC)

## **Broderick Steed, Umo<sup>n</sup> ho<sup>n</sup> Nation Chair**

The Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee is a standing committee of the NSEA. The Committee meets annually, at which time officers are elected and other business conducted. The duties of the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee are set forth in the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Bylaws. A top priority of the committee is to assist in the design and implementation of the Minority Involvement Plan, National Education Association 3-1(g).

NSEA currently has 615 self-identified minority members (2.8 percent of membership). EMAC holds six meetings every year. The committee has reached out to recruit minority members across Nebraska. EMAC provides financial assistance to minority members seeking professional development opportunities. These opportunities include regional Minority Leadership Training and issues conferences for each of the four NEA-recognized ethnic groups.

EMAC communicates with members across the state by reviewing and updating the EMAC page on the NSEA Web site; formulating and delivering the monthly newsletter, *The Tapestry*, via e-mail; through book giveaways and distribution tables at various state conferences (SEAN Conference and Delegate Assembly); and by distributing multicultural literature and information.

The minority e-mail list serve was prepared from NSEA membership data. Communication was sent to the identified minority members on this list informing them of the NSEA Minority Involvement Plan, elections, training and activities. Minority members are encouraged to participate in these activities. Association activities and the Minority Involvement Plan are posted on the Web site.

The annual Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Conference will be replaced this year with the NEA English Language Learners/Minority Community Outreach Institute (ELL/MCO) Train the Trainers being held on August 4 -7 in Kearney. The Institute will train members to train others to work collaboratively with ethnic minority communities, help participants to improve the quality of education at their school, and teach strategies that have been found to be effective in closing the achievement gap.

### **Issues that were addressed during the 2008-09 association year included the following:**

#### **■ EMAC successfully nominated Vida Stabler (Umo<sup>n</sup> ho<sup>n</sup> Nation, Macy) for the National Education Association's Leo Reano Memorial Award.**

The award criteria are:

- Promote equal educational opportunity for American Indian/Alaska Native children.
- Help schools acquire and use information about federal legislation affecting American Indians/Alaska Natives.
- Help schools develop programs to enhance the education of American Indian/Alaska Native children.
- Help eliminate the misuse of federal funds that are set aside for American Indian/Alaska Native education.
- Promote, design, and coordinate training programs for counselors and teachers of American Indian/Alaska Native students.

Stabler will receive the award at the NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards dinner on Thursday, July 2, 2009, in San Diego.

### ■ **English Language Learner/Trainer of Trainers**

English Language Learner/Trainer of Trainers conference attendees Renee Bohaty, Pat Luedke and Brooke Schwab shared information as to an ELL Training Program that is now available to Nebraska schools and teachers. The trainers are willing to bring the training to Nebraska schools. The program can help all students, but is geared for ELL. This training course can be used for college credit, and as training for educational support personnel. Renee, Pat and Brooke presented at the Minority Leadership Training during Western Regional Leadership Conference Jan. 15-18 in Albuquerque. They discussed what is going on in Nebraska.

### ■ **EMAC Travel Policy**

EMAC has updated its travel policy. The changes (underlined) include:

**Frequency Limitation:** Members are limited to one request per association year (or two requests if one request is to attend NEA's Representative Assembly as a delegate). Requests must be submitted no more than 90 days prior to the event and no less than 30 days prior to the event.

**Application Process:** Realize that EMAC funding is limited to \$1,000 per request (up from \$500).

- **Proposed Bylaw change for NSEA's EMAC** (EMAC fully supports this change, submitted by NSEA Board Member Tamara Bailey): The last sentence of Article III, Section 5, of the EMAC Bylaws states that *Any NSEA member is eligible to serve in this capacity and need not represent any racial or ethnic minority*. EMAC favors deletion of this sentence, as it goes against the rationale that was read during the 2006-07 Delegate Assembly. The reason NEA changed the name of the Minority Affairs Committee to the Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee was to ensure that only ethnic minorities are members of EMAC. It was then-President Reg Weaver who gave authorization or charge for the name to be changed. If this sentence remains, it opens the door for non-ethnic minority members to become a non-voting member of the Executive Committee. In order for the NSEA EMAC to be aligned with the NEA, I believe and feel this line needs to be deleted. Plus, we must be more diligent in recruiting ethnic minorities to serve in leadership positions within the NSEA.

# NSEA Government Relations Committee Report to the 2009 NSEA Delegate Assembly

**Lisa Fricke, Lexington, Chair**

The NSEA Government Relations Committee and the NSEA Government Relations staff members have been actively involved in the political scene this year. Seeking quality education candidates (local, district, state, national) and monitoring education bills have been priorities.

By revising the candidate questionnaires this year, interview teams have had a better understanding of candidates' positions on public education. With a balance of Republicans and Democrats on the interview teams, GRC/LCT members interviewed candidates who took the time to fill out the questionnaires.

The 25 Government Relations Committee members and the Legislative Contact Team have continued to lobby state senators in Lincoln and in their home districts. NSEA has also networked with other professional education organizations to make sure that quality education for every child remains a priority in the legislature. With NSEA as the umbrella, the GRC and LCT members worked together to prove the need for increased public education funding.

The successes of NSEA in the political arena can only be attributed to active NSEA members. That's why the GRC is continually encouraging members to get involved in the political process. Every major decision in public education is a political decision. Because of this, GRC/LCT and other NSEA members need to be proactive: recruiting candidates, campaigning, developing networks, training, volunteering, e-mailing leaders, informing members, and writing letters. If members don't stay proactive, they will deal with negative consequences that could affect all of us.

When GRC/LCT members ask teachers to make short-term commitments for the advancement of education, they hope that teachers will continue to say, "Yes!" If all NSEA members contributed a little time, everyone would reap the benefits. As John Steinbeck wrote in his novel *In Dubious Battle*, "...a community {as a} whole is greater than its parts." A few individuals can't accomplish what all of us as a whole can do for public education.

# NSEA Bylaws and Policy Committee Report to the 2009 NSEA Delegate Assembly

**Leann Widhalm, Norfolk, Chair**

NSEA's Bylaws and Policy Committee has been meeting throughout the association year to update the NSEA Board Policy Handbook. This process has been a continuation from last association year's work. Committee members worked in sub-committee groups to realign current policy. Bylaws and Policies in the following categories have been edited and revised to be uniform throughout the document: board operations; services; community/member relations; building and grounds; management; and finances.

There is one proposed Bylaw change for the 2009 NSEA Delegate Assembly. With the Higher Education group being a separate NSEA district now the wording in Article III, Section 2 must be changed to fit this status.

I would like to thank the committee for their hard work throughout the year. The committee would also like to thank NSEA President Jess Wolf for his guidance in making sure that all the NSEA documents are up to date and following current policies in one consistent document.

# NSEA-Retired Annual Report

**Roger Rea, Omaha, President**

## **Membership continues to grow**

NSEA-Retired membership continues to be the fastest-growing membership in the NSEA family. As of February 2009, we have added 238 new members to our ranks. Our membership now stands at 4,282. When that is added to the 1,176 pre-retired subscribers, our total membership now stands at 5,458. NSEA-Retired is the only state-wide retired organization that guarantees continuation of NSEA services for retired educators and access to NEA member benefits. For more information about pre-retired or retired life membership, contact Maureen Nickels at:

**[maureen.nickels@nsea.org](mailto:maureen.nickels@nsea.org)**

## **Retirement information seminars offered by NSEA-Retired**

NSEA-Retired offers an excellent pre-retirement seminar for active local associations throughout the state. The seminar has been presented more than 120 times in the last five years to more than 4,000 members. For more information, or to arrange a seminar for your local, contact your NSEA District president, local association president, your NSEA-Retired district director, or NSEA-Retired President Roger Rea at:

**[rrea68154@yahoo.com](mailto:rrea68154@yahoo.com)**

## **Medicare information seminars provide needed guidance**

For several years, NSEA-Retired has conducted seminars on the basics of Medicare, as well as information on **NSEA-Retired BlueSenior Classic**, the Medicare supplement that is endorsed by NSEA-Retired and underwritten by Blue Cross of Nebraska. In 2008 more than 180 NSEA-Retired members attended one of five information seminars held around the state to get information about making the transition to Medicare as well as how to use the Medicare web site to select an appropriate Medicare Part D provider for prescription medication. More information on making the transition to Medicare can be found on the NSEA-Retired Web site at:

**[www.nsea.org/members/retired](http://www.nsea.org/members/retired)**

## **Mentoring project provides help for first-year teachers**

NSEA-Retired has a nationally-recognized Intergenerational Mentoring Project to provide assistance to first-year teachers in making the transition from full-time student to full-time teacher. Now in its sixth year, this program pairs first-year teachers with retired educators across the state. First-year teachers say that the experience of a retired educator enhances their confidence to do an outstanding job in the classroom. Retired educators say that the experience re-invigorates their minds and helps them keep their connection with the classroom. NSEA-Retired is looking for retirees who are willing to participate as mentors. Contact either your NSEA-Retired District director or the SEAN leadership to get more information. To request a mentor application brochure, contact Maureen Nickels at:

**[maureen.nickels@nsea.org](mailto:maureen.nickels@nsea.org)**

## **NSEA-Retired awards four scholarships to SEAN members**

Four \$750 scholarships are awarded by NSEA-Retired to members of the Student Education Association of Nebraska (SEAN) each year. Applications for these scholarships are available to students during their student teaching semester in every teacher training institution in the state. Contact your campus SEAN leadership for more information and for application forms.

### **Keeping our members informed**

NSEA-Retired uses both print and electronic media to inform our members of important events and activities of the association. The *Advocate*, the newsletter for NSEA-Retired, as well as *The Corner*, the column that appears in each issue of the *NSEA Voice*, have both won national awards for excellence. These two publications are edited by Tom Black. You may suggest story ideas to Tom at:

**wpc6296@cableone.net**

Check out the NSEA-Retired web page at **[www.nsea.org/members/retired](http://www.nsea.org/members/retired)**. The Web site is updated frequently and keeps our members informed about issues of importance. Registration for NSEA-Retired activities is conducted through the website. Contact John Jensen, who maintains the content of the web page, at:

**jensen.omaha@gmail.com**

### **NSEA-Retired Lobby Day the most successful ever**

Fifty NSEA-Retired members and guests came to the Unicameral in February to share information with state senators on teacher pay and the need to provide state income tax relief for pension incomes in Nebraska. A luncheon at the Governor's mansion capped the event.

### **Mini Conferences attract retired educators**

Two "mini conferences" were held this year for NSEA-Retired members. The Kearney Country Club was the site of the fall conference, and Boys Town was the site of the spring conference and annual meeting. The agenda for the conferences included keynote speakers, a business meeting, and break-out sectionals on various topics of interest to retired educators.

### **NSEA-Retired elections**

NSEA-Retired elected a new district director from Metro District, elected 15 delegates to NSEA Delegate Assembly, and elected five delegates to NEA Representative Assembly this spring. NSEA-Retired is in the process of realigning its district boundaries to conform to the new NSEA district borders.

# ESP Committee Report

**Linda Welch, Ralston, Chair**

The February 24, 2009, meeting was held via telephone conference to keep the cost down.

Those who participated were: Linda Hoffman, Ralston ESP member, chair; Rebecca Marks, Omaha ESP member, NEA Board of Directors; Mark Shively, Omaha teacher, NEA Board of Directors; Helen Tanderup, ESP member, Metro Community College; Lael Churchill, ESP member, Central Community College; Terry Cook, ESP member, Overton; Tracia Blom, teacher and NSEA Board of Directors, South Sioux City; Marlene Wehrbein, NSEA Uniserv director. Unable to participate were Pam McGeary, ESP, Westside; and Chadd Arner, ESP, Chadron.

The April 1 early enrollment date for ESPs was discussed. We explained the funds that are available thru your UniServ director and the requirements that apply. The committee wants all districts and units to push for early enrollment of ESPs. This is a great way for the ESPs to join without paying dues until September, during which time they get to explore membership benefits and ways that they can save more than they pay in dues.

At Delegate Assembly in April, the ESP Committee will host a table with ESP information. We also want as many of the ESPs on this committee as possible to try to attend Delegate Assembly to work the crowd and push for ESP issues and urge teachers to organize ESP associations in their local districts. The ESP's need to know that they can join, and they need to know the benefits of joining.

NSEA UniServ Director Marlene Wehrbein is looking into and working on trying to get more information on the ESP Web site. She will get back to us about this and what we can do.

We shared the names of the ESPs going to the ESP national convention. We are happy to see new faces and new areas from around the state going. This conference is very helpful and builds interest and excitement. Those attending are Patty Dean and Roberta Mueller, Bridgeport; Crystal Ellis, Peru State College; and Shelley Rowlee, Gering. If you see or know of any of these people, please encourage them.

Trainings for ESPs and leaders is April 17- 18 in Norfolk, and June 19-20 in Fremont. There is no cost to attend. We need to spread the word. This is for members and potential members to come and ask questions and really find out up close and personal how the NSEA works and how it can help them.

Terry Cook shared that he is working on organizing another early enrollment push for the ESP's in his local.

Linda Hoffman is also doing a push with paraeducators at Ralston with the support of NSEA UniServ Directors Gary Osborn and Marlene Wehrbein.

# Higher Education Academy Report

**Roger Davis, University of Nebraska-Kearney, Chair**

The highlight for the past year was undoubtedly the December 2008 decision by the NSEA Board of Directors to create the Higher Education Academy District. Bringing together all of the higher education professionals into one statewide district, with a voting board member and a budget, is a much appreciated endorsement and recognition of the higher education community within the NSEA family. The Academy Directorate has submitted its first budget and held its first elections for new officers and a board member, and looks forward to the good work ahead.

Planning for the Second Biennial NSEA Higher Education Conference is moving forward. The conference will be held May 15-16, 2009, at the Downtown Holiday Inn in Lincoln. Jim Rice, president of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), will be a keynote speaker. All NSEA members are invited to attend. The theme of the conference is “The Campus of the Future, the Future of the Campus.” More information is available on the NSEA Higher Education Academy Web site.

At the national level, NSEA is well-represented in higher education with Barb Limbach, Chadron State College, serving on the Editorial Review Panel of the NEA higher education journal *Thought and Action*. In addition, Roger Davis, University of Nebraska-Kearney, was re-appointed to the NEA Membership Advisory Committee and the NEA Higher Education Subcommittee. Davis and NSEA UniServ Director Jerry Hoffman also presented a program on their research on the P16 movement at the NEA Higher Education Conference in March 2009.

Finally, the Academy is also pleased to note that the Directorate Vice President Joan Trimpey, Metro Community College, is serving on the Board of Directors of the Educator’s Health Alliance.

Higher Education Academy Directorate officers are: Roger Davis, president, University of Nebraska-Kearney; Joan Trimpey, vice president, Metro Community College; Bill Clemente, secretary, Peru State College; Todd Young, treasurer, Wayne State College; Kelly Asmussen, faculty area representative, Peru State College; Karen Rodgers, AP area representative; Metro Community College; and Lael Churchill, ESP area representative, Central Community College, Hastnigs Campus.

# Product Endorsement and Funding Requests Committee Report

**Robert Beck, Dundy County/Benkleman/Haigler, Chair**

The Produce Endorsement and Funding Request Committee met several times this year. Our committee serves as a filter for the Board of Directors in that time isn't spent during board meetings discussing the pros and cons of the many requests that come to the board each month for either funding or endorsement. As a filter, our committee can look at each item more closely to determine whether it is worthwhile for our members, or where fund for the request might be found in the budget. We then take our recommendations to the full board.

# Budget Committee Of the NSEA Board of Directors

**Nancy Fulton, Wilber-Clatonia, Chair**

The Budget Committee is a NSEA Board of Directors' committee made up of appointed representatives from each of NSEA's six districts, plus two at-large board members elected by the NSEA Board of Directors each September. The elected officers of NSEA and management staff are also members of the committee.

On Oct. 18, 2008, the Budget Committee met to review the strategic goals for the Association and to form a subcommittee to revise the strategic goals and objectives. On Dec. 6, 2008, the Budget Committee met to make final revisions to the strategic plan document and presented it to the Board of Directors for acceptance.

Also on Dec. 6, 2008, the Budget Committee met and recommended to the NSEA Board of Directors a dues goal increase of \$9 for the 2009-10 Association year. This goal is used for the purpose of planning and development of a working budget. The working budget is compiled based on requests from the five program areas and the six NSEA governance districts and the newly formed Higher Education District.

On Feb. 20, 2009, the Budget Committee met by means of WebEx to thoroughly review the working budget and to discuss possible areas that could be reduced to make a tentative balanced budget. On March 19, 2009, the Budget Committee met again using WebEx to further make decisions on the tentative budget and to recommend the dues amounts for the different membership categories to the 2009 Delegate Assembly. The NSEA Board of Directors adopted the proposed dues increase at its March 21 meeting. A 2.34 percent, or \$8, increase for a full-time active member will be part of the dues proposal acted on during the final session of the Delegate Assembly. Specific income and expense amounts can be found in the Strategic Planning and Budget document sent to all delegates.

Following the Delegate Assembly's determination of the dues amounts, a final 2009-10 budget will be developed and adopted by the NSEA Board of Directors at the July meeting.

# Personnel Committee Of the NSEA Board of Directors

**Nancy Fulton, Wilber-Clatonia, Chair**

The Personnel Committee is a 17-member committee of the NSEA Board of Directors that meets regularly throughout the year to bring recommendations to the NSEA Board regarding personnel issues.

The Personnel Committee recommends salaries for the management employees to the Board of Directors. This includes salaries for the president, the executive director, the associate executive director, the comptroller, the president's administrative assistant, the executive director's administrative assistant, and the associate executive director's administrative assistant. Action for re-employment was done in June and salary recommendations were made at the Jan. 31, 2009, Board of Director's meeting. The Personnel Committee also makes recommendations to the NSEA Board of Directors concerning the employment and salary for new employees.

The Personnel Committee meets with the executive director to set performance expectations for the association year and conducts a written evaluation based upon written NSEA board member input. Evaluations are completed in June and January of each year.

# NSEA Retirement Committee

**Deb Wallman, Fremont, Deb Freese, Norfolk, Co-Chairs**

The NSEA Retirement Committee held a WebEx meeting on Nov. 25, 2008, to review the Nebraska Retirement Systems actuarial report and to discuss legislative proposals for the 2009 session.

Although the plan is secure and no increase in contributions or state funds is necessary this year, the outlook for next year is uncertain. The market losses since June 30 will be recognized through the five-year smoothing but ultimately the state is responsible for any shortfall. Other states are in much worse situations than Nebraska.

The Revenue Committee killed our two bills exempting pension (LB538) and Social Security (LB303) benefits from state income tax. Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett, Revenue Committee chair, has promised to conduct an interim study on these two issues, as well as to introduce a bill next session.

The Retirement Committee also reviewed and modified the five-year goals. They are:

- 95 percent purchasing power for retirees: Goal reached in 1999, with a one-time adjustment to 85 percent in 2007.
- Annual COLA linked to cost of living: 2.5 percent, or cost of living, whichever is less, reached in 2001.
- Increase the formula factor to 2.25 percent. That factor is currently 2 percent.
- Restructure the NPERS Board composition to guarantee representation of a retired school employee (other than an administrator): Currently, there are two school employees (one teacher, one administrator); two at-large members; and one each from the State Patrol, judges, county employees and state employees.
- NPERS board members elected by constituent groups. This is a new goal, as of 2008.