Terry’s Table Talk

Public school education is in the crosshairs at the state and national levels. Both seek to advance their beliefs in government funding for charter schools -- without any accountability. With less funding, many schools in poor, moderate, and rural areas will not be able to afford increasing their local school district levies. That means less monies and resources for their schools. Test scores will go down without the funding so there will be a hue and cry for more charter schools. A vicious cycle of more charter schools at the expense of public schools.

Currently, our state legislators are trying to overturn the Clean Missouri initiative, which passed by 62 per cent of Missouri voters. They are set to expand Charter schools across Missouri. This expansion will have an impact on our pension benefits and funding for education, which means less teachers, higher class sizes, additional duties, more testing, and lower teacher salaries.

At the national level, we have Betsy De Vos pushing school choice – privately-run charter schools paid by the government and vouchers for religious schools with no accountability to the voters. Steve Yoakum, PSRS/PEERS Executive Director, reported that the attacks on our defined benefit continue. In 1978, 68% of American pensioners had a defined benefit; today only 8% have a defined benefit. Corporate America has shifted the responsibility for retirement benefits from employer to employee.

In order to save our public schools and pension benefits, we need to increase our commitment to public education by increasing our donations to MNEA-PAC. Out of more than 5,500 retired members, only 101 gave money to PAC. These 101 retired members gave $10,000 to MNEA-PAC. Our voice on the PAC Council is based on the number of people who contribute, not the dollar amount. We have two members who split a vote. When we were teaching most of us designated a set amount to be donated to MNEA-PAC via payroll deduction. Now that we're retired, that doesn’t happen. Please go to MNEA.org and make a donation today.
New Political Advocacy Coordinator

Margo McNeil, Political Advocacy Chair

Meet Margo McNeil, retired teacher from Ferguson-Florissant School District, former State Representative, and current Hazelwood School Board member. Margo will be coordinating political advocacy for our Missouri retired teachers. Helping children have access to great public schools has always been her passion, which is why she volunteered to help on this effort. Margo explains that there are many good reasons to make your voice heard. First, your experiences in the classroom makes you an expert advisor on education matters. You know how education works and legislators can benefit from talking with you. Secondly, in being an advocate, you can improve public education and help our kids get the first class education they deserve. There is a good article that talks about what was accomplished in 2019 because of educational advocates. Click here to read: https://educationvotes.nea.org/2019/12/23/7-great-things-that-happened-in-2019-thanks-to-public-education-activism/

Additionally, Margo shares a couple of ways to make your voice heard and to stay informed. First, join the MNEA “Legislative Update” listserv by going to www.MNEA.org and clicking ‘subscribe’. The amazing Otto Fajen, MNEA’s Director of Legislation, writes a daily update during session (Jan-May) on issues that specifically impact educators and students. MNEA also encourages members to attend one of the capitol action days and Legislative Forums scheduled throughout the state. You will find information about these on the ‘Legislative Update’ emails and under MNEA News at www.MNEA.org

At the Federal level, there is a wealth of information at www.strongpublicschools.org. This website has directions on how to be a delegate to Missouri’s state Republican or Democratic caucuses, information/views on the Presidential candidates, and information about educational issues. In order to be a delegate in the Democratic caucus, you must have voted in the March 10th Presidential Primary. If you recently moved, changed your name, or just haven’t taken the time, you need to register to vote. Do so by filling out a card found at most public libraries, schools, or going to your local Election Board. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING is to VOTE!

The US Congress convened on Jan 3rd and the Missouri General Assembly began on January 8th. The filing of bills began in Missouri on December 1, so we are beginning to have an idea of what will be coming up during 2020 session. We know that there will be efforts to overturn Amendment 1, known as Clean Missouri. There is also concern about voter suppression efforts and voter purging. Even if you vote regularly, check to make sure you are registered at least a month before the next election. More will be coming later as the legislative sessions in Washington and Jefferson City get rolling.

Please contact her via email if you have questions: margomcneil@hotmail.com.
Metro St. Louis NEA-Retired gathered for the annual holiday luncheon at Cheshire Inn. Music was provided by the Ladue Middle School String Orchestra.

The Greater Kansas City NEA-Retired celebrated the holidays with a luncheon at Ophelia’s on the Square in Independence. A brass quartet played traditional Christmas carols that included a sing along.
Mid-MO Winter Celebration was well attended at WJ’s in Boonville.

MNEA-Retired Fall Luncheon featured a silent auction to benefit CHEER.

MNEA-Retired members attended the fall luncheon in St. Louis. MNEA President Phil Murray was the guest speaker. A special silent auction was held to benefit CHEER. We raised over $1800 to make grants possible for active members.
Spotlight on Regional Groups

Greater Kansas City NEA-Retired

The Greater Kansas City NEA-Retired (GKC) is the first regional to reach the “pinnacle of excellence” on the MNEA-Retired Regional Achievement Recognition Form and the first in a series of articles highlighting all the regionals. GKC is a vibrant and energetic regional emulating their new president.

Kassie Payne, as the new president of GKC, stated that the win was a team effort by her officers: Vice President Dorothy Walk, Treasurer Linda Innes, Secretary Sandy Ruppert, Media Specialist Beth Ann Roland, and Members-at-Large Mary Varner and Mary Gorman.

Kassie Payne is married and has two children, a son and a daughter. She retired in 2015 after teaching middle school math for 32 years. She immediately joined the GKC retired group. As VP of GKC, Kassie became president when Georgia Brady was elected MNEA-Retired Vice President.

Kassie believes that the most important thing about GKC is that everyone is welcome to join and participate at whatever level they feel comfortable. She says “we are very fortunate to continue to share our lives after retirement and make a difference for the students in our area.”

Besides being involved in the usual service projects—CHEER, SOS (collecting donations for Aspiring Educator’s Association dues), and the HOPE fund, GKC became involved in additional community services. They collected and distributed hygiene items to local schools. They also collected mittens and hats for social services as well as books for a local children’s hospital.

Legislatively, they have participated in the usual Capitol Action days, promoted contributions to PAC (both MNEA and NEA), and attended MNEA Legislative Forums. In addition, they assisted local associations by supporting their needs, notarized petitions for Medicare expansion, are active in democratic organizations, and one member serves on a school board. Way to go, GKC.
MNEA-Retired Annual Meeting
April 24, 2020 ~ Margaritaville Lake Resort ~ Registration Form
Deadline: April 14, 2020

TO REGISTER ELECTRONICALLY, GO TO: www.mnea.org/retired

9:00 a.m. – Registration Opens (Salon A)
Meal tickets will be provided at Registration on April 24th from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

9:30 a.m. – Optional Workshop Options
☐ The Life and Times of Ben Franklin, presented by Bill Stewart – Room 7071
☐ Social Media How-To Help, facilitated by Don Schulte, Treena Murray and Lloyd Klinedinst, Room 7072

11:00 a.m. – Annual Business Meeting & Election of Officers/Delegates Begins (Salon A)
Please check all that apply: ☐ I am a first-time attendee ☐ I will attend the Luncheon
☐ I will attend the MNEA-Retired Annual Business Meeting
I will bring additional people with me: ____________________________________________

12:15 p.m. Lunch in Parasol 1 - $30.00 – Please choose one
All lunch options will be served with salad, dinner roll and dessert.

☐ Cilantro Lime Chicken – grilled and topped with zesty cilantro lime glaze and fresh pico, served with coconut and pineapple rice.
☐ Marinated and Slice Flank Steak – served over creamy polenta with a mushroom demi glaze.
☐ Grilled Balsamic Marinated Portabella Mushroom – served with seasonal vegetables, tri-color quinoa and red pepper coulis.
☐ Special Dietary Requirement ________________________________________________________

If you have food allergies or other dietary needs, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your request. We can accommodate most special requests.

Name ___________________________________________ Phone # _________________________
Email ___________________________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________________________
Guest Name ________________________________________________________________________
☐ Check Enclosed $ ___________ To pay by Credit Card call Tracy Flaherty at 314-584-1305.

PAC Auction: Bring new items to donate and cash for the drawings!

Silent Auction: ☐ Yes, I will bring an item(s) to contribute to the silent auction to be held during the Annual Meeting.
All voluntary contributions benefit MNEA PAC and are not deductible as charitable contributions. If you cannot bring an item, we invite you to help support public education and have fun at the same time by participating in the auction.

Return completed form to: MNEA-Retired, Attn: Tracy Flaherty 1810 East Elm Jefferson City, MO 65101
1:30 p.m. – Annual Business Meeting and Election of Officers/Delegates Reconvenes

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY TO BE AN OFFICER OF MISSOURI NEA-RETIRED
Election at MNEA-Retired Annual Meeting – April 24, 2020

If you are interested in running for any of the following MNEA-Retired positions, go online at www.mnea.org/retired and click on the Declaration of Candidacy link.

or

Print the form and email to tracy.flaherty@mnea.org or mail it to:
MNEA-Retired Candidate Declaration, Attn: Tracy Flaherty, 1810 E Elm, Jefferson City, MO 65101

POSITIONS OPEN:

Secretary (two-year term 2020-21 & 2021-22)

Executive Council Member-At-Large (two-year term 2020-21 & 2021-22 – four to be elected)

Delegate to NEA-R and NEA-RA, July 2 - 6, 2020 in Atlanta, GA, (five (5)* to be elected, one-year term. MNEA-R President will serve automatically) Those that are not elected as delegates will serve as alternates.

Delegate to MNEA Representative Assembly Fall 2020 through Spring 2021 (twelve (12)* to be elected, two-year term 2020-21 & 2021-22). MNEA-R President and Vice President will serve automatically. Those not elected as delegates will serve as alternates.

*Number of MNEA-R, NEA-R and NEA-RA delegates may change due to membership numbers.

After the meeting, stop by the President’s Reception!
Contribute to CHEER
Lend a hand to our colleagues working in the classroom by making a contribution to help fund future grants.

https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/CHEERFund.aspx

PSRS Meeting Report
Missouri NEA Legislative Director Otto Fajen represents MNEA and MNEA-Retired members at the meetings of the PSRS/PEERS Board. Read the report of the latest meeting at https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/PSRSMeetingMinutes.aspx