

President to President

December, 2020

As the song-writer penned, “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!” In my home it’s Merry Christmas; for some it’s Feliz Navidad, Happy Hannukah, or Happy Kwanza. However, you celebrate, may you have a joyous season. I’m just a kid at heart and love this season so while I celebrate, I’m taking this opportunity to thank you for your good, diligent work, for your advocacy, and your support in the work of NEA Retired. THANKS so very much!

Toward Equality: I have made an extra effort this fall to try to secure more minority involvement, especially in serving on our virtual committees. When I requested presidents to name minority members to committees, I received a good response. We now have an average of 23% minorities serving on committees, but that is not enough. We’d really like to see the 33% that NEA asks through the 3.1g rule for delegates at the R A in both delegates and membership involvement. Therefore, I am urging you to encourage minority members to run as delegates in the upcoming Annual Meeting elections you’ll be holding soon in your states. Call, write, explain the procedures...whatever it takes to get ALL of our members involved.

Members Matter: As you are aware, I have taken Membership as my goal this year...not just increases by accident but increases from outreach and good old membership practices. Please read the following message from our Retired Membership Chair, Tom Wellman, with some good practices already being used in some states. You should have a plan in place by now and be working toward increases.

Members Matter -

Our new normal has presented us with numerous challenges in our life and our association work. We find it close to impossible to meet with perspective members and try to gain their trust and confidence to join us and grow our membership at both the state and national level. Here in Nevada we had to face a very harsh reality, many of our active members did not know that our state association even had a retired program. This was a bitter pill to swallow! As a leadership team we

meet to discuss this issue and realized that we had to put a face with our name. We had to make sure that ALL of our active members knew that we existed and were still very passionate about public education.

We took advantage of the resources that NEA-Retired provided and applied for a membership grant to help fund our visits to local associations across the state. This one little thing made a great big difference in the active members perception of our program.

As I spent the time looking through the best membership practices provided by other state retired programs. I saw the same common thread, our members trying to put a face with their name. Here are some examples of state association working to put a face on their program and work.

1. Florida (FEA-R) – presents workshops for their active members that are planning to retire. Through these workshops they are able to promote joining their retired program.

2. Michigan (MEA-R) – At all MEA events the retired members set up a table and hand out brochures that explain membership in their program and they also answer questions about the retirement process.

3. New Jersey (NJREA) – Members make the effort to attend all 21 counties representative council meetings. They are able to set up a table to pass out information to active members about the retired association. They are given time on the agenda to promote their program, talk about membership, and answer questions for active members.

4. Massachusetts (MTA-R) – Their representatives make the time to attend all of their counties' representative council meetings. They set up a table, pass out information, and answer questions about their program and retirement.

You can see that many states are already taking the steps needed to put a face with their name. Perhaps the most important thing to share at this point is that your state retired program must work on and develop those relationships with your state association leadership team. Listen to what they have to say and see how your program can best assist them in meeting their goals. Take the time and make the extra effort to work with the staff and let them know your program is there to help.

As we continue to adjust to our new normal, make sure you ask permission and attend the ZOOM meetings that actives hold. Engage in the conversation and discussion; this helps to build those bridges.

Now it's time to find your state program's new normal and find those members!

Elections Are Over: ---except in Georgia! This is one more bridge to cross. Keep at it! Join in on that effort for one last push!

Saying *elections are over* causes a big sigh of relief across all states, I'm sure. Regardless of which side of the aisle you're on, it was one long, noisy, tiresome process, but that's what democracy is all about. Now we must get to work. Your Legislative Advocacy Committee will soon be sending you some requests for action, and you can be sure our need for collecting NEA PAC Funds will never end. The need is forever great! However, it isn't as great a request for increase as I stated in the November Pres. to Pres. newsletter! I guess I was so eager to go BIG that I heard the committee agree to a 12% increase over last year. Nope, *it's 2%*. Guess I needed to turn up my hearing aids! Either way, we still need to continue to ask EVERY member to give and to keep asking all year. Use previous ideas for outreach AND be creative and diligent in this process.

NEA Retired Post Summit Conference: While we do know the when of our conference, March 14-16, we don't yet know all the details. The planning committee will be meeting December 1 and 9 to make some final designations. We do know there will be a \$30 fee to help cover some special activities during the conference; since it will be virtual, we're "spicing it up" a little.

If you register for both the NEA Summit (March 12-14) and Retired Conference, there is a \$50 fee---a savings of \$10, and if you wish to also attend the Higher Ed. Conference (March 10-12), the fee is \$75 for all three. Please plan now for your members to attend/participate in these important conferences. Registration will now be open till probably the end of January, but I'll keep you posted on plans. We do know we'll have our usual workshops and special guest speakers.

Since we will be of necessity meeting virtually, our NEA PAC Fund-raising will again be virtual. Watch for seasonal sales for some great items for the auction and stay tuned for up-coming information on this virtual activity. You did a great job last

summer in a short period of time, but now you know we have to do it virtually again so please get the word out to start buying some great items.

Communications: Please keep those articles coming to be used for future NEA TODAY magazine articles. Also please remember to share an electronic copy of your newsletters so we can keep abreast of your happenings and perhaps learn more ourselves about communicating! (whadyapple@frontier.com or rbrown@nea.org).

As Tiny Tim said, **“God Bless us everyone!”**

***Hope and possibilities* are still standing amidst the virus so stay safe and positive. Good health and happiness to each of you and yours.**

Warmest greetings to you and yours,

Sarah