



News

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

Kentucky Retired Teachers Association
Serving Retired Teachers Since 1957



VOLUME XLIX, NUMBER 4

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

JUNE 2015

Patsy Hamilton Named Volunteer Of The Year

Each of the KRTA districts nominates a Volunteer of the Year. This year Ms. Patsy Hamilton of Middle Cumberland was the recipient of the award.

Ms. Patsy Hamilton took six hours of training to become a teacher when she was eighteen years old. She would teach a few months and then go back for more training. She eventually became a full-fledged teacher and initially taught in one-room and two-room schools.

Ms. Patsy Hamilton's gentle spirit made her a much beloved primary teacher known for nurturing and fostering her young charges.

During those teaching years, working with a fellow teacher, she began visiting people in the community who needed a helping hand. She did this throughout her career which spanned thirty-eight years.

Her generosity of time and encouragement did not diminish upon her retirement. In fact, her volunteer time grew exponentially as her personal "Reach Out" program has continued for nearly twenty years.

Ms. Hamilton has accumulated over 800 hours of volunteer work this year alone by making daily/weekly phone calls to shut ins to see what their needs might be. Food, errands, groceries, books, magazines, devotionals, and puzzles are just some of the items she might take with her on her visits. She visits community people in their homes, the hospital, assisted living homes and nursing homes. She helps those who are lonely or unable to get out on their own.

She is a part of a church family, a member of the Pulaski County Retired Teachers Association, a reserve member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Iota Chapter for excellent teachers, a member of Senior Friends at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital, and other associations/organizations.

As she continues to care for those who need a helping hand, she will often take a friend along with her. It is in this way, by her example, she

(Continued on page 4)



Delegate Assembly Elects New Officers for 2015-16

Pictured from left to right are the new officers:
Romanza Johnson (Third District) Vice President
Cathy Gullet (Big Sandy District), President Elect
Patsy Rainey (Central KY West District), President
Faye Shehan (Northern District), Past President

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Kentucky Retired Teachers Association

News

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

7505 Bardstown Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40291-3234



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PERSONALLY SPEAKING . . .



Bob Wagoner
Executive Director

Convention Report

In 2014-15 our membership grew for the 27th consecutive year! First, I want to report that we reached our 2014-15 goal of 30,015 members. The total membership of 30,195 is an increase of 643 over last year. Our continued growth is noteworthy because many state retired teacher associations continue looking for ways to reduce their losses rather than increase their numbers. Congratulations to all those devoted members who helped make this possible.

I have the highest regard for the work of the KRTA staff. Betty, Brenda, Carla, Charlotte, Emily, Janie and Mary strive diligently every day they work to provide exceptional service to our members. The number of members utilizing our many benefits continued to grow again this year. People accessing our redesigned website and Facebook page showed steady growth. During the 2015 General Assembly, the number of members signing up for our “weekly legislative update” email blasts designed to keep members informed about the legislature’s activities grew substantially.

This year we provided N.O. Kimbler scholarships valued at \$1,550 each to all 16 public community and technical colleges in Kentucky. We continue to receive letters of appreciation from both the recipients and the colleges.

The 2015 Regular General Assembly ended with no progress on resolving KTRS’ unfunded liability. We were close to a solution with HB4, but the House and Senate could not reach an agreement and the bill died. Retired teachers are scheduled to receive a 1.5% COLA effective July 1, 2015.

KRTA continues to work on these Social Security issues: Mandatory Coverage, Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). To-date no WEP or GPO repeal bills have been filed in the 114th Congress. It is anticipated, however, that companion WEP and GPO repeal bills will be filed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the near future.

We must continue to be vigilant in our opposition to Mandatory Social Security

(Continued on page 12)

Social Security News & Pension Watch

Social Security News

KRTA has long championed issues in Congress in addition to our active state legislative agenda. Two very important Social Security laws prevent many public educators from receiving benefits, the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

After years of Congressional neglect on the important WEP and GPO issues, U.S. Representative Kevin Brady (R-Texas) and Richard Neal (D-Massachusetts) have introduced the Social Security Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act (HR 711).

HR711 will permanently eliminate the current WEP formula and implement a more fair calculation of Social Security benefits for public employees whose public pension fund is not coordinated with Social Security (such as Kentucky school districts).

The new formula will give full credit to a future retiree for the years they paid into Social Security, and address the issues that originally led to the creation of the WEP. Additionally, the formula will be fair to employees working in dual-covered systems (like non-covered public pension fund and other private sector work).

Future retirees under this new formula will see WEP’s impact cut in half.

For those already retired, Social Security benefits will be recalculated and many retirees will realize Social Security increases as high as 36%.

If we can work with Congress to enact this legislation, benefits will be recalculated in January 2017. KRTA has worked on the WEP and GPO for almost three decades. This legislation can make a real impact on more than a million retired public workers in Kentucky and around the nation.

Getting anything passed in Congress will take a major effort on behalf of KRTA, and we are ready to work hard with like-minded groups across the nation to get you more of your earned Social Security benefits.

Regular updates concerning Social Security and Pension issues appear in each issue of the KRTA News. Look for them.

JOIN. SHARE. CONNECT.



Find us at
Facebook.com

/KentuckyRetiredTeachersAssociation

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE . . .

Serve—Grow—Promote

As I sit and write my final KRTA News article, I have mixed emotions. The position requires a lot of time and responsibility. I am not sure where the months have gone. I must say it was a most pleasant and rewarding experience representing the 30,000 retired teachers.

I began my year by saying, “The Future is here: Serve—Grow—Promote.” We did achieve all three of these goals.

Volunteerism is best described as *to serve and not be served*. KRTA’s Volunteer of the Year Award winner, Patsy Hamilton, is 86 years young. She is from Pulaski County RTA in the Middle Cumberland District. Accepting the award was Shirley Dick Wolf, Middle Cumberland’s president.

I am pleased to announce that 25,523 food items were given to local community food banks or back pack programs. There were 3,165 bags of school supplies given to local schools. Hours totaling 981,168 of volunteer service in local communities were performed. This resulted in a contribution equaling \$19,307,516.

Grow in Membership—and this we did. Our “goal” was 30,015 and we reached 30,195 members. Hats off to all those working on the Membership Committee. There were forty-six locals and one district “Yes We Did” Awards. There were ten



Faye Shehan, President

local and six district “Top Hat” awards as well as fifteen honorable mentions.

KRTA’s 57th Annual Convention was well attended. The opening dinner got us off to an excellent start. Not everyone won a door prize, but well over 200 did win. Our speakers were informative and interesting. Steve Boyd encouraged us to “Never Stop Dancing.” His comments make you think about how you’re living.

Don Hines gave a brief overview of the legislative position on the pension issue, expressing thanks for the work of retirees during the 2015 General Assembly. Ray Roundtree reminded us that pension envy is a nationally growing phenomena. He also commented on pension problems in our country. Beau Barnes from KTRS spoke at the Delegate Assembly on HB4. If you only attended this meeting it would have been well worth your trip.

We thank Jane Gilbert and KTRS staff for the smooth transition to the United Healthcare Group. Mrs. Gilbert’s lecture was followed with a question and answer session. Don Pace encouraged everyone to take advantage of our benefits, especially the Living Well Promise, Health Vitality, and Healthways SilverSneakers Program.

KRTA/AARP-KY Specialist, Ceibert Gilbert, recognized the Grandparent of the Year Award Winner, Michael Slone, and his family. When Michael shared his story, it brought tears to our eyes. There are a surprising number of grandparents who are raising grandchildren.

(Continued on page 4)

KRTA PARTNERS . . .



The Safe Way to Rent a Car

By Lee Michael Katz

When you rent a vehicle, it's important to give it a quick safety check before you leave the rental agency parking lot. Just a few minutes can potentially save you a major headache down the road. Here's what to look for:

- Go over the basics. Inspect your vehicle's tires and test the brakes, horn, and windshield wipers. Check the gas gauge. Does the steering feel wobbly? Can you handle the vehicle comfortably? If something doesn't meet your approval, ask for another car.
- Make adjustments. Check and adjust mirrors, lights, headrests, and even the radio before leaving the lot. Making these adjustments while navigating unfamiliar roads can be dangerous.
- Check for room between your chest and the steering wheel. The minimum recommendation is 10 inches. This distance gives enough room for the air bag to deploy.
- Document existing damage. Mark any existing damage on your rental agreement. Be sure to walk around the vehicle and notify the rental company of any scratches or dings on the vehicle before you leave the lot.
- Decide on rental insurance in advance. As a Liberty Mutual Auto Insurance policyholder, the liability, comprehensive, and collision coverage you may have on your own car is extended to your rental vehicle, but only in the U.S. If your policy includes both comprehensive and collision, consider declining those options from the rental company. You're still liable, however, for paying your deductible in an accident with a rental vehicle. If that's a concern, consider purchasing the rental company's collision damage waiver.



Dave Farmer
Liberty Mutual Insurance

To learn more about Liberty Mutual Auto and Home Insurance or get a free, no-obligation quote, call David Farmer at 502-429-4504 ext. 51690 or visit libertymutual.com/krta.

Coverage underwritten and provided by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. ©2014 Liberty Mutual Insurance



There's No Place Like Home

Remaining in our homes while we age and begin to need assistance with everyday activities is the preference of most people. As a result, there are a number of organizations and support networks dedicated to helping Americans "age in place." The education, technologies and care services these groups provide are enabling us to remain comfortably in our homes for far longer than in the past.

"Home care" is a broad term that covers a wide range of needs, from homemaking and companionship to meal preparation and medication reminders. It may also include personal care services like bathing, dressing, and grooming. To promote a safe and functional lifestyle, a caregiver can help you brush your teeth, secure the buttons on your shirt, or stand by while you bathe to make sure you don't fall. Often, skilled services that utilize the expertise of a nurse may also be grouped within the home care category. Services include checking vital signs and coordinating with doctors and other professionals charged with your care. Home care can be a highly effective solution for individuals who are not sick enough to need around-the-clock assistance and monitoring, but just need a little help to stay safe and independent in their home.

If "aging in place" is part of your plan as you grow older, then you may want to consider a home health care only insurance policy.



Jeff Johnson, State Manager
North American Life Plans

While home care is generally more affordable than nursing home care, it still adds up. In Kentucky you can expect to pay from \$14-\$25 an hour depending on the type and level of care provided (Genworth 2014 Cost of Care Survey). Care for 6 hours a day, 5 days a week could run up to \$40,000 a year.

Home health care only insurance policies work much the same way as comprehensive long-term care insurance plans, they just don't provide coverage for facility stays. Because they don't protect against the high cost of a facility stay, these plans can provide peace of mind for a fraction of the cost.

Plans are available to KRTA members up to age 99 who can health qualify. The only way to know for sure if you qualify, is to speak with a KRTA Long-Term Care Insurance Program representative. To request a no-obligation, confidential personal review, please call 1-888-362-1214 or 502-553-7630.



YOUR KRTA HEARING BENEFITS

As we have reported earlier, your MEHP (Medicare Eligible Health Plan) benefits through KTRS now include a reimbursement of up to \$500 for hearing

aids every three years. This benefit works along with the benefits we have enjoyed for many years through Hear In America Hearing Plans, which also covers your extended family (parents, siblings, adult children, etc.) no matter where they live. Here is how you can get the maximum benefit out of both programs:

1. Call Hear in America at 1-800-286-6149 to register and schedule your free hearing screening.
2. If you choose to purchase hearing aids through Hear In America's participating provider you will get Hear in America's discounted pricing, extended warranties, and 3 years of free hearing aid batteries.
3. In order to get your reimbursement, send a letter including your name, address, date of birth, and UHC member ID number along with a copy of your purchase agreement and proof of payment to the address on the back of your member ID card:

United Healthcare Claims Department
PO Box 31362
Salt Lake City UT 84131-0362

KRT15

The Stephen Foster Story

would like to honor Kentucky's Retired Teachers with a special **Buy1-Get 1 Free** offer.

Show your KRTA Member Card at time of purchase or mention membership on a phone order and receive one free ticket with the purchase of one adult admission. Not Valid 6/13/15

The Stephen Foster Story

Call or visit website for calendar of shows!

ALL SHOOK UP

The story is all new. The hits are all Elvis!

800-626-1563 www.stephenfoster.com

My Old Kentucky Home State Park, Bardstown, KY

JUNE 13-AUGUST 15, 2015

(Cont'd. from "President's Message" on page 2)

Special thanks go to convention volunteers and staff: Karen Gilbert, Carla Hahn, Frank Hatfield, Margaret Hatfield, Mary Hines, Charlotte Lindley, Elaine Shyrock, Dorris Tucker, Neal Tucker, and Mary Wagoner.

Thanks to the Jefferson District's Reception Committee: Joyce Cecil, Marianne Humphries, Rick Tatum, Debbie Utz, and Fonrose Wortham.

Liberty Mutual graciously sponsored a delicious dinner opening night and North American Life Plans sponsored our luncheon. Both companies donated door prizes.

N. O. Kimbler Memorial Scholarship Fund Silent Auction was a huge success. All proceeds from the silent auction will be used to support the scholarships we award annually to Kentucky's 16 Community and Technical Colleges.

KRTA's Retired Teacher's week in October was well observed across the state at local, district and state levels.

It seems that my term as KRTA President just began and now it is ending. As I reflect back on my year as president, I am pleased with our accomplishments and would like to thank Dr. Wagoner and Mary for excellent leadership and support. I would also like to thank Janie Caslowe, Brenda Meredith, Betty Hester, Carla Hahn, and Charlotte

Lindley for their guidance and help. Emily Carey, our Social Media Director, made sure our Facebook page kept us all informed with up-to-date daily postings. Thanks goes to the Executive Council and District/Local Presidents for their dedication and commitment. A very special thank you goes to Patsy Rainey, President Elect, for her kindness, loyalty and unending support. Thanks to Cathy Gullett, Vice-President, and Carolyn Falin, Past-President, for their support. To my home District, Northern and Kenton County members for their travels, support and loyalty, I want to express my appreciation. Thanks to my husband, Bill Shehan, and our family for their awesome help and support. I will remember this year fondly and all of you, the faithful members of KRTA. Thank you for what your friendliness and warm welcomes have meant to me.

KRTA is blessed to have an excellent slate of officers to lead us into 2015-16.

As the Irish blessing says:

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back,

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields and,

Until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Spotlight on Judy Sutter

Why I'm a Member of KRTA



Judy Sutter

Becoming a Member of Kentucky Retired Teachers' Association was never a question for me. Even before I retired, I knew I would become a member. I was in the classroom for 35 years and, for the most part, enjoyed my teaching experiences. I loved seeing the "Aha moment," when a student grasped the ability of understanding what was being taught. Most days teaching was a joy for me. I was fortunate enough to teach in the same facility for 35 years and, believe it our not, it was my hometown. My roots were planted and being in my hometown had its perks. I knew families and I never saw this as a problem even when I had students that had relationships to these families.

Since I taught school for 35 years, I never had much of an opportunity to pay into Social Security. I worked part time while in college but not enough quarters to draw money from Social Security. Therefore, I knew my pension would come from Teachers' Retirement funding. While in the early days of teaching, I never felt afraid of my pension "not being available" when I retired. I thought, "Well, I don't have to worry about Social Security, I will have my Teachers' Retirement." After nine years as a retired teacher, I am beginning to question the stability of my annuity or pension plan.

I believe in the strength of numbers and at present, I believe, KRTA has over 30,000 members. There must be strength and voices in those numbers. Also, I look to see those numbers increase for awhile. As a retired teacher I cannot draw benefits from Social Security, neither mine or my spouse's who has worked 40 plus years and is still employed. I must be sure I have funding to purchase the necessities of life and I will FIGHT to maintain my pension. I cannot do this alone. I NEED KRTA with members who know the plight I and others are facing. I need these individuals who are skilled in knowing the correct ways to ensure my pension stays in place and individuals that can lobby to have a legislative body to fight for my benefits. Not only do I worry about my pension, but I look at the younger generation. My daughter is a teacher, and I have several friends whose children have become teachers. I hope to clear the way for them. I cannot do it by myself. This is where KRTA and membership can help me provide a smoother path for them. If this is not done, Kentucky will lose quality teachers.

Being a member of KRTA will help me achieve this goal. One voice will not be heard in state government but when we have over 30,000 speaking, "We WILL be heard."

I, personally, cannot understand why a retired teacher would not want to become a member of KRTA. Even the unseen benefits are many and the camaraderie with individuals who share the same endeavors as you is so valuable. I encourage anyone who is a retired teacher or planning on retiring from the teaching profession soon to join his/her local KRTA immediately.

Judy Sutter

Central KY West District

Volunteer Hours for Rockcastle County



RCRTA has met twice this year to work with UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education) in putting together 2,238 packets to be used in the "Give Me A Reason!" program. This will be an ongoing project for the association.

KENTUCKY TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS

REGISTER ON-LINE AT <http://ktrs.ky.gov>

June 13, 2015

Cave City Conv. Center
502 Mammoth Cave Street
Cave City, KY

Registration 8:30 am
Seminar 9 am - noon

July 7, 2015

Frankfort Country Club
101 Duntreath Street
Frankfort, KY

Registration 4:30 pm
Seminar 5 pm - 7:30 pm

August 29, 2015

Grant Co High School
715 Warsaw Road
Dry Ridge, KY

Registration 8:30 am
Seminar 9 am - 12 pm

CONVENTION 2015 . . .

April 21 Pre-Convention Meetings

District Presidents' Meeting



Vice President, Cathy Gullett

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by KRTA Vice-President Cathy Gullett. Edwin Cook offered the invocation and Buddy Rushing led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2015 CONVENTION PROGRAM

Dr. Wagoner reviewed the program and the seating arrangement for the General Session on Tuesday.

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS' REPORTS

Each district president talked about their year's activities. Dr. Wagoner asked they turn in a written copy of the report.

- \$0 Copayment for both
- Completed by:
 - ▶ June 30 = \$75 gift card
 - ▶ July 1-September 30 = \$50 gift card
 - ▶ October 1 - December 31 = \$25 gift card

Gift card choices might be Applebees, Kohl's, Amazon, Starbucks, and Subway. Contact UHC at 1-855-901-1011 to acknowledge that your Wellness Visit or Physical has been completed and to receive your gift card. Gift card must be claimed by January 20, 2016.

- HouseCalls—home visit with a UHC nurse or physician. Receive a \$25 Target gift card.

KY Rx Coalition Pharm-Assist Offering:

In addition to purchasing power, Know Your Rx Coalition offers member institutions clinical resources to help further manage Rx spending. It offers counseling service via live pharmacists who assist in the identification of lower cost prescription alternatives, contacting your physician to facilitate seeking authorization for lower cost alternative therapies, act as liaison for retirees/physicians for issues with Rx benefits including prior authorization, step therapy, and other programs. They act as an educational resource for the retiree assisting in adverse effects, drug interactions and general medication information. There are six pharmacists to help you. Speak to a live pharmacist by calling 1-855-218-5979.

Edumedics—A Leader in Disease Management.

Edumedics offers face-to-face clinical visits with a Nurse Practitioner for 30-45 minute appointments. If you have diabetes and/or high blood pressure and high cholesterol, they can provide the guidance you need to help you achieve a more enjoyable lifestyle. Call Edumedics for more information 1-855-210-8514.

Healthways SilverSneakers Fitness.

Staying in shape and feeling good are important at any age. That's why the SilverSneakers Fitness Program is included—at no extra cost. So what are you waiting for? Sign up today and see how much fun exercise can be! Presently 14% of the MEHP enrollees are actively participating. Meet new friends, learn new things, and get involved at health fairs and social events.

MEHP Spouse Qualifying Events.

Marriage, spouse losing other employer/retirement system sponsored coverage, spouse COBRA expires, tag-along with retiree, death of retiree, or spouse turning age 65 are all qualifying events.



Jane C. Gilbert, Director Retiree Health Care

KEHP (KY Employees Health Plan Under 65)

Health care benefits for Kentucky Retired Teachers under 65 are provided by the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) through the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Personnel Cabinet, Department of Employee Insurance (DEI). The KEHP is a self-insured plan contracted with Anthem (for medical) and CVS Caremark (for pharmacy) to administer all claims. Benefits and monthly insurance premiums are based on plan choice, level of coverage and tobacco use of retiree and/or dependents. The KTRS may pay a portion of the retiree's premium based on years of retirement service and entry date. The choice of plans include LivingWell CDHP (Consumer Driven Health Plan) and LivingWell PPO.

Compass Choice Reward (Transparency Vendor) where the choice is yours! **Shop** for any of the 25 medical procedures and diagnostic tests showing costs and distance such as mammograms, MRIs and colonoscopies. **Choose** the most cost effective facility. The doctor may have admitting privileges at more than one facility. **Get Rewarded** because Compass shares the savings and sends an incentive check to your home from \$15-\$500 depending on the choice.

Shop for the best facility by website:
www.compassmartshopper.com
 at the call center:
 1-855-869-2133 (Mon - Thurs 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

The Wellness Vendor is Humana Vitality. The online health assessment deadline was May 1, 2015.

A vitality check is a biometric screening that consists of: lab work to test your cholesterol and blood glucose; a blood pressure check; and height, weight and waist circumference to learn your Body Mass Index (BMI). For more accurate results, fast for at least nine hours prior to the test.

WageWorks is the COBRA/HRA Vendor.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2015

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| First - David Foley | Upper KY River - LeAnn Mullins |
| Third - Anna Sturgeon | Big Sandy - Daniel Branson |
| Fifth - Charlotte Nedros | Northern - Linda Thornton |
| Central KY West - Connie Wiggs | Central KY East - James Robinson |

KTRS PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS

Dr. Wagoner reviewed the upcoming seminars and asked each district president to go to the one in his/her district.

UPDATE DISTRICT PRESIDENTS FOR 2015-16

New presidents reported were: Sandra Rudolph (First); Clarence Gamble (Third); Rick Tatum (Jefferson); Parhenia Wells (CKW); Lori Flerlage (Northern).

OTHER BUSINESS

- President Faye Shehan's reception at 3:30-4:30 in the Atrium
- Annual Convention dinner for everyone at 6:15 in the Grand Ballroom
- Membership/Pre-Retirement meeting will be Monday, May 18
- District Presidents' meeting will be Monday, July 6

The Executive Council joined the Presidents' meeting for lunch and to hear the state committee reports. Business was conducted by KRTA President Faye Shehan.

Executive Council Meeting

STATE COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPORTS

A. KTRS Insurance Update by Jane Gilbert, KTRS

MEHP (Medicare Eligible Health Plan—65 & Over)

KTRS has a new vendor: UnitedHealthcare. The implementation has been successful. The enhancements for 2015 are:

- Coverage for a routine hearing exam every 12 months at a \$0 copay
- A \$500 hearing aid allowance every 36 months
- Six routine podiatry visits per calendar year
- hiHealthInnovations Hearing Aids Discounts
- My Path to Health — "Renew" magazine, published 3 times a year
- Solutions for Caregivers (provides care planning and care coordination services designed to relieve some of the burden and stress of caregiving and supports the overall well-being of the person receiving care)
- Quit Power—Smoking Cessation
- Annual Wellness Visit or Physical with your doctor

Committee Reports

Health, Wellness and Insurance

The Co-chairs Carolyn Falin and Don Pace are available to attend your RTA meetings to present the latest information. The yellow Health Care Benefits Guide contains important information for those under 65 and those over 65. Humana Vitality offers a reward system for healthy living. They encouraged the over 65 members to utilize the Healthways Silver Sneakers Program.



Co-Chair Carolyn Falin

They also reminded us to encourage others to review the necessary steps when turning 65. These steps can be found in KTRS newsletters. If you need assistance, call KTRS.



Co-Chair Don Pace

Membership & Pre-Retirement



Betty Hester and Ernie Trosper

Membership Co-Chairs Betty Hester and Ernie Trosper presented reports and awards at the Monday evening dinner and assemblies.

The "Yes We Did" Award was presented to the 46 locals and one district who met the percentage goal set last April by the Membership Committee. In addition, this year the top 10 locals and top 6 districts were honored with the "Top Hat" Award for members gained.

Ernie summarized the membership accomplishments to be presented at the opening dinner:

The goal of 30,015 was met and surpassed by the January 20, 2015, deadline with 30,195 members. The district and local associations who "went over the top" were presented the "Hop to It" Award. The "Hop to It" Award was created by Debby Murrell. Debby is pictured below with the local and district winners.

The Automatic Dues Deduction plan is utilized by 24,120 members. We encourage the ADD be used by everyone. It saves money and time for the KRTA office and the KRTA member.



Debby Murrell presents the "Hop To It" Award to Faye Shehan and Bert Baldwin

Debby Murrell reminded district presidents to solicit help from their membership people to assist with pre-retirement seminars in their areas. The meetings conducted by KTRS average about 75 future retirees. A smaller, more concise packet of materials is being used for solicitation of new members at the seminars. The Membership Committee will meet on May 18, 2015, to plan the membership program for 2015-16, including goals and incentives.

Legislative

Don Hines and Ray Roundtree, Co-chairs of the Legislative Committee, gave a brief overview of our legislative position on the pension issue, expressing thanks for the work of retirees during the 2015 General Assembly and hope that the letters and visits will produce gains for us in the coming months.

They brought attention to the 2016-17 Legislative Program. It was approved in December by the committee and adopted at the Delegate Assembly on Tuesday, April 21.

Ray reminded us that pension envy is a "nationally-growing phenomena." He encouraged retired teachers to vote at the upcoming primary election and encourage family members to also vote. Care should be taken to make sure you know how a candidate stands on the pension issue. He pointed out some of the statements made by some legislative candidates:

1. "... don't take money from the taxpayers for pensions."
2. "... support the idea of 401k's for new hires"
3. "I didn't know KTRS needed money"

Other misinformation is out there. We just have to continue to inform legislators when we hear these things.

Ray commented on the pension problems in our country, for other pension systems as well as public pension systems such as ours. An "all-out effort is needed to get legislators better informed." This year's efforts have helped tremendously; for example, Ray and Don have been invited to meet with someone who voted against HB4. Ray and his team feel that most legislators "do know that KTRS needs money." And, perhaps, the 138 members surely are thinking "what are we going to do to make up for the failure to fund KTRS since 2008?"

"We've made progress by stimulating enough interest in the Legislature that they're thinking about the limited amount they've provided since 2008."

However, we think legislators now have a better understanding of our needs.

Things we need to do when working on improving funding are:

- a. invite legislators to local meetings to see, meet and get to know their voters.
- b. develop long-range strategies.
- c. bring together other groups (active teachers) to work on KTRS concerns.
- d. work more with the leadership in the House/Senate on a year round basis.

Ray recognized the people who help from time to time in Frankfort: Doug Cole, Allen Schuler, Gene Mosely, and Guy Strong. He reminded us that we are the key because **legislators listen to their constituents.**

Retired Teachers Are Under Scrutiny: Why? Because private pensioners are taking cuts. Let's be cautious and "not crow about our benefits." There is nationwide chaos in public pensions. Those affected by these cuts in pension and healthcare aren't going to be sympathetic to those who have good benefits.

Leadership Role You Need to Take: We need to have some mechanism to thank legislators for what they've done for retired teachers. Emphasize to your locals how important it is to invite them to come to your meetings. Some locals award certificates of appreciation or an engraved plaque. The 2016-17 Legislative Program can be seen on page 11.

Cont'd. from "Volunteer of the Year" on page 1

this project to sustain long after she is gone.

Eighty-seven years young, Ms. Hamilton's commitment to continue her generous support to others is remarkable and inspiring. She has never sought attention or accolades.



Don Hines above



Ray Roundtree below



Carla Hahn and Margaret Hatfield assist with convention registration

President's Reception

In keeping with the tradition, the president's district honored her with an afternoon reception. Thanks to the Northern District for giving everyone the opportunity to honor President Shehan. The reception was held at 3:30 on Monday afternoon and members lingered to socialize until 5:30.

This is a good opportunity to honor the president, but it is a great time to meet new friends and greet your old friends!



Above: Faye and Bill Shehan enjoy the President's Reception. Below: Patsy Rainey thanks President Shehan for a job well done.



All members enjoy the goodies served at the President's Reception.



Monday Evening Dinner & Reception

The Grand Ballroom was the setting for the opening activities on April 22 at Hurstbourne Holiday Inn in Louisville. After a delicious dinner the "Top Hat" and "Hop to It" awards were announced by Betty Hester, Ernie Trosper and Debby Murrell. Over 300 people enjoyed fun, food, fellowship and the chance to take home one of the over 200 fabulous door prizes that were donated by our local RTAs. Without the donations from local associations, all of this would not have been possible. Perhaps your local's door prize was a gift certificate, cash, a beautiful basket, a handmade quilt or afghan, or an item depicting your corner of Kentucky. Many door prizes this year were handcrafted by KRTA members. Each and every item certainly added to the fun of this event.

Some of these donations became the highlights of the Silent Auction to raise money for the N. O. Kimbler Scholarship fund. This was the second Silent Auction and was a huge success with a total of \$1,380. A special thank you to Charlotte and David Lindley for overseeing the auction.

Jefferson District members served as the Hospitality Committee that coordinated the fun event. Those members are Chairperson Joyce Cecil, Marianne Humphries, Rick Tatum, Debbie Utz, and Fonrose Wortham. Rick Tatum served as emcee of the program. We appreciate the work they do to make this event a success.



Pictured above are L to R: Elaine Shyrock & Dorris Tucker registering door prize gifts

Pictured below are L to R: Karen Gilbert, Mary Hines and Mary Wagoner registering door prize gifts and convention participants

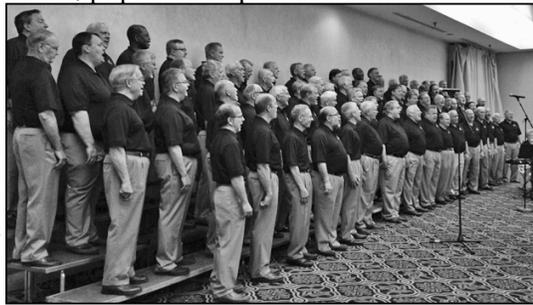


The Master's Men

It was a pleasure again this year to have Past President Melanie Wood showcase the Master's Men from Southeast Christian Church. The Master's Men are a talented, dedicated, fun-loving group of individuals who sing for joy from a repertoire that includes hymn arrangements, spirituals, contemporary Christian music, plus classical, traditional, popular and patriotic selections.



Directed by Melanie Wood; Pianist Mary Helen Vaughn



The Master's Men of Southeast Christian Church

From the first rehearsal of 12 members in January 1980, through the growth to over 100 members, the desire of the Master's Men has been to sing praises to the glory of God. This is done

by singing for the weekend services and special events at Southeast Christian Church and also throughout the community.

In October of 2002, the Master's Men made their first international mission trip to the island of Cuba. It was there God opened the door for the Master's Men to perform with the Cuban National Choir and witness openly on the communist island through Christian music. Subsequent trips were made in 2004, 2006 and 2008 with each trip helping to open additional doors to Christ in the Cuban community.

As a result of preparing for these mission trips, the Master's Men now sing in both English and Spanish, which has also helped to open doors in the Spanish community at home in Louisville.

Whatever the setting, country or occasion, the Master's Men follow the Psalmist's inspiration: "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord". Psalm 150:6 NIV



Kimberly Silent Auction

The annual Silent Auction to benefit the N.O. Kimbler Scholarship Fund was a great success with a total of \$1,380! Items donated to the auction ranged from beautiful handmade gifts to autographed items from the University of Louisville and University of Kentucky. Thanks to all of you who participated in this event. We look forward to a bigger and better auction next year. Special thanks to Charlotte and Dave Lindley and Janie Caslowe for coordinating the event.



Charlotte Lindley, KRTA Staff, holds the Petrino autographed football donated by Jeff Johnson with North American Life Plans

Volunteer Hours of KRTA Members Valued at \$19,307,516



Vice President Cathy Gullett and President Faye Shehan

KRTA
7505 BARDSTOWN ROAD
LOUISVILLE, KY 40291
APRIL 21, 2015
DATE

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF *Commonwealth of Kentucky* \$19,307,516
NINETEEN MILLION THREE HUNDRED SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED SIXTEEN DOLLARS

FOR: 2014 CONTRIBUTIONS BY KRTA MEMBERS
948,347 VOLUNTEER HOURS
24,906 FOOD ITEMS
3,125 BAGS OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES

KENTUCKY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Morning General Assembly



Steve Flairty

Doing What Others Say Is Impossible . . . One More Time

Retired teacher and now published writer Steve Flairty based his address on words he heard from a remarkable Kentucky woman from Wickliffe a few years back: “Everybody should do something once in their lives that others say is impossible.”

Flairty expressed his admiration for the sacrificial work of today’s retired teachers, but reminded KTRA members that “we’re not finished yet.” To provide inspiration for the challenge, he shared stories of teachers and others who overcame tremendous obstacles to become uplifting examples in their communities and beyond. He included three now-retired teachers: Henderson’s Roy Pullam, born into poverty but who later sponsored the largest Junior Optimist Club in the world, a group known for amazing service activities. Also mentioned were Hopkinville’s Ruth Lature, a ground-breaking activist for those with dyslexia and Charlotte Wethington, a crusader against substance abuse who lost her own son to a heroin overdose. Flairty also told the riveting story of Josh Nadzam’s triumph over poverty and a dysfunctional home to become an award-winning student athlete at UK, and shared Corporal Matt Bradford’s courageous fight to live a normal life and bless others after losing his vision and both legs in military service.

Flairty closed by encouraging our members to continue doing what others say is impossible . . . one more time.”

Public Pension Issues

There is some really good news, sort of good news and mixed with some not so good—really bad news were the topics Jim Miller, consultant to the Ohio Public Employee’s Retirement System and the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security, presented to the delegation.

There are two factors drive what Mr. Miller said to convention goes:

1. Attacks on public pension plans
2. National concerns about retirement security
 - ▶ Baby boomers not saving for retirement
 - ▶ Social security and medicare trust funds
 - ▶ Disappearing DB (Defined Benefit) plans in the private sector

All go together to produce a national focus on our plans.



Jim Miller

Really Good News

At the present time there is nothing in congress about mandatory Social Security. There are non-covered employees in all 50 states. The cost to Kentucky for new hires to be included in Social Security would be \$600 million. So it’s a really bad idea.

HR 711 sponsored by Rep. Brady, Kevin [R-TX-8] Amends title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) of the Social Security Act to replace the current windfall elimination provision (WEP) (that reduces the Social Security benefits of workers who also have pension benefits from employment not

covered by Social Security) for individuals who: (1) become eligible for old-age insurance benefits after 2016 or would attain age 62 after 2016 and become eligible

for disability insurance benefits after 2016, (2) subsequently become entitled to such benefits, and (3) have earnings derived from noncovered service performed after 1977.

It establishes a new formula for the treatment of noncovered earnings in determining Social Security benefits and prescribes a second formula to modify the WEP for current beneficiaries. The bill is in the Ways & Means Committee and Kentucky does not have a member in Ways & Means.

Some Good—Some Bad

Social Security Fairness Act of 2015. Amends Title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) of the Social Security Act to repeal the government pension offset requirement applicable to and reducing husband’s and wife’s insurance benefits, widow’s and widower’s insurance benefits, and divorced mother’s and divorced father’s insurance benefits with respect to federal, state, or local government employees who receive a government pension and did not pay Social Security taxes during their years of government service, and so did not earn entitlement to Social Security benefits for those years.

It repeals also the windfall elimination requirement with respect to computation of an individual’s primary insurance amount under which OASDI retirement or disability benefits are reduced if the individual receives a federal, state, or local

(Continued on page 12)

Grandparent Essay Contest Winner

On April 21, 2015, Michael Slone received top honors in the 2015 Grandparent of the Year essay contest sponsored by Kentucky Retired Teachers Association (KRTA) and AARP Kentucky. Michael and his grandmother, Dana Payne, received their awards at the Annual “AARP Kentucky Grandparent of the Year” ceremonies in Louisville.



Dana Payne and Michael Slone

The Crabbe Elementary School student’s grandmother, Dana Payne was the subject of his winning essay, “My Special Grandma.” According to Michael, “My Grandma should win because she’s a life saver, caring and loyal.”

Michael’s essay was selected from thousands of student entries across 277 schools in 99 Kentucky counties.

The annual contest highlights the nurturing relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren. “The essay contest is just one important way to show how important grandparents are in the lives of children,” said AARP Kentucky’s KRTA volunteer liaison Ceibert Gilbert of Stanton.

“As they say, it takes a village,” said Payne. “I just did my part.”

AARP and KRTA share a long collaborative history and continue to work together to grow the annual essay contest. Judging is based on grammar, form, neatness, creativity, expression and characteristics of the grandparent. Local volunteers from KRTA’s 119 local organizations facilitate the contest with the winner selected by a panel of AARP and KRTA representatives.

Michael received a \$100 award and special plaque and Dana Payne received a commemorative award from AARP. Kristy Minton, Michael’s fifth grade teacher received \$150 for school supplies. AARP Kentucky Senior Program Assistant Rachel Fautz presented the awards before an audience of hundreds of retired educators.

Michael’s essay can be read at <http://states.aarp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Michael-Slone-Essay-1st-place-2.pdf>

Local Recognition



Gold Award



Silver Award

Local Recognition Awards

Gold

- Adair
- Bracken
- Breathitt
- Bullitt
- Butler
- Caldwell
- Carlisle
- Casey
- Christian
- Crittenden
- Daviess
- Edmonson
- Fleming
- Fulton
- Garrard
- Grant
- Graves
- Grayson
- Green
- Hancock
- Hart
- Henderson
- Knott
- Lee
- Lincoln
- Letcher

Silver

- Lewis
- Logan
- Lyon
- Marion
- Marshall
- Martin
- Mason
- Metcalfe
- Middlesboro
- Monroe
- Montgomery
- Nelson
- Nicholas/Robertson
- Ohio
- Pendleton
- Powell
- Trimble
- Union
- Wayne
- Webster
- Whitley
- Wolfe
- Woodford

Bronze

- Ballard
- Barren
- Bluegrass
- Breckinridge
- Calloway
- Campbell
- Carroll
- Clark
- Clinton
- Cumberland
- EKU
- Estill
- Gallatin
- Hopkins
- Jefferson
- Johnson
- Madison
- McCreary
- Menifee
- Owen
- Pike
- Pulaski
- Rowan
- Scott
- Simpson
- Taylor
- Todd
- Trigg
- Warren
- Washington

Gold = 49
Silver = 30
Bronze = 20



Bronze Award

Stand Up



and Be Heard!



Kentucky Retired Teachers Association

District Recognition



District Recognition Award

Gold Silver Bronze

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| First | Fourth | Third |
| Second | Eastern | Fifth |
| Middle Cumberland | Central KY West | Central KY East |
| | Northern | Big Sandy |
| | | Upper Cumberland |
| | | Upper KY River |

Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards

Each year the 119 local RTAs strive to grow in membership and participation in the community and in the program sponsored by KRTA. Points are earned based on the local associations' emphasis on these important areas:

- Membership increases and percentage of potential members
- Number of meetings held and the topics of those meetings
- Contact with new retirees and honoring them at a meeting
- Participation in the state convention
- Contact with local legislators concerning current issues
- Contribution to the community
- Contribution of \$30 or more to the N. O. Kimbler Scholarship Fund
- Standing committees in Health/Wellness & Insurance, Legislation, and Membership

Gold Seal = 425 Points Silver Seal = 375 Points Bronze Seal = 325 Points

M. L. Archer Award

In recognition of his contribution to the Association, the M. L. Archer Award was established. This award is given to top local associations with membership of at least 90% of those eligible. Mr. Archer served as Membership Committee chairman for 12 years.

Virginia Shaw Award

In honor of Virginia Shaw and her continued work with membership, the Shaw Award is awarded for Districts reaching the goal of 80% of those eligible. Mrs. Shaw served as Membership Committee chairperson for 17 years.

M. L. Archer



M. L. Archer Award

| | | | |
|-------------|---------|-----------|--------|
| Carlisle | 100.00% | Wayne | 97.00% |
| Crittenden | 100.00% | Fulton | 95.80% |
| Green | 100.00% | Martin | 95.80% |
| Hancock | 100.00% | Robertson | 95.70% |
| Lee | 100.00% | Webster | 95.20% |
| Metcalfe | 100.00% | Wolfe | 95.00% |
| Monroe | 100.00% | Hickman | 93.00% |
| Nelson | 100.00% | Knott | 92.60% |
| Powell | 100.00% | Fleming | 92.50% |
| Woodford | 100.00% | Bracken | 92.00% |
| Mason | 99.40% | Breathitt | 91.60% |
| Washington | 99.10% | Letcher | 91.60% |
| Montgomery | 98.90% | Casey | 91.40% |
| Trimble | 98.20% | Lincoln | 91.30% |
| Hart | 98.10% | Lyon | 91.20% |
| Henry | 98.10% | Ohio | 91.00% |
| Middlesboro | 98.10% | Gallatin | 90.90% |
| Owen | 97.70% | Ballard | 90.50% |
| McCreary | 97.50% | Nicholas | 90.40% |
| Carroll | 97.40% | | |



Virginia Shaw Award

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Middle Cumberland | 84.1% |
| Second | 82.9% |
| First | 82.0% |

Reaching Extraordinary Goals



Betty Hester, Membership Co-chair, created the “Yes We Did” and “Top Hat” awards.



Betty Hester, Membership Co-chair

The “Yes We Did” awards appeared in the March issue of KRTA News.

“Top Hat Award” is given to the top ten locals and the top five districts for their number of members gained over the previous membership year and are presented at the dinner the night before the convention begins.

| County | Members Gained |
|-----------|----------------|
| Jefferson | 69 |
| Bluegrass | 33 |
| Morgan | 29 |
| Daviess | 28 |
| Boone | 21 |
| Laurel | 20 |
| Logan | 20 |
| Warren | 20 |
| Henderson | 19 |
| Madison | 19 |

Districts with Greatest Improvement

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Eastern | 84 |
| Jefferson | 69 |
| Central KY West | 63 |
| Second | 61 |
| Fourth | 55 |

Afternoon General Assembly

Never Stop Dancing



Dr. Stephen Boyd

Never stop dancing is a metaphor for life. Take a chance, get out of your comfort zone. Someone has said, “Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass; it is about dancing in the rain.” Vicki Baum wrote, “There are shortcuts to happiness and dancing is one of them.”

There are several ways of applying the “never stop dancing” metaphor to life. Practice the personal touch by starting conversations with strangers. The more people we converse

with the more opportunities we have to stimulate our thinking and consider new opportunities.

Be a part of something bigger than yourselves. Join service clubs, volunteer at your schools, libraries, church ministries, and be active in your professional organizations. Mentor young people; share your knowledge and experiences with those who can profit from what you have learned.

Look to the past to keep growing for the future. Keep track of things. “Everything measured improves. Everything measured and recorded improves exponentially” according to one sage. Read biographies to relive the past and learn from notable people’s mistakes and successes. For example, reading Boys in the Boat, the story of the 1936 U.S. rowing team that won the gold medal in the Berlin Olympics, gives you background on the beginning of World War II.

You don’t have to master an area to enjoy and grow from it. Florence Foster Jenkins was a terrible opera singer. But that did not keep her from performing nationally. Her reaction to her critics was, “People may say I can’t sing; but no one can say I didn’t sing.” You don’t have to dance well to enjoy and profit intellectually and physically from the activity.

Learn to look at the mundane in a more creative way. Change routines. Go a different way to church or to work. Observe children to see how they view things that they see and experience for the first time.

An older member of the Inuit Tribe said about hunting the walrus: “The hunt itself is dangerous. So if you are going to walk on thin ice, you might as well dance.”



2016-17 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

As KRTA members work to preserve the Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System (KTRS) these points are important to remember.

- Retired teachers are not covered by Social Security. There is no financial safety net for Kentucky’s retired teachers.
- KTRS was established in 1938 because Kentucky’s retired teachers were not permitted by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to participate in the Social Security program.
- Approximately 49,500 retired teachers, beneficiaries and survivors receive annuity payments each month. Over 92% of these recipients live in Kentucky.
- Over \$1.97 billion in annuity payments are distributed yearly providing a significant positive economic impact on all of Kentucky’s local communities. Historically, approximately 70 percent of these payments come from KTRS’ diverse, conservative investment earnings.

ITEM I: SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE ACTUARIAL SOUNDNESS OF KTRS.

COMMENT: Continued lack of action on additional monies for KTRS will result in the system’s funding level dropping from 51.9% to 43.0% and damaging the state’s credit rating. Enacting KTRS’ “Teachers’ Pension Refinancing Plan” proposal would have the immediate impact of raising the system’s funding level to 63.0% and improving the state’s credit rating.

ITEM II: KEEP THE GOVERNANCE OF KTRS AS IT IS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED AND OPPOSE EFFORTS TO TAKE FIDUCIARY DECISIONS AWAY FROM THE KTRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

COMMENT: The Board of Trustees, acting as a semi-independent state agency, has a record of 76 years of successful management that is unsurpassed in state government. Presently, KTRS is ranked in the top 10% in public pension fund investment returns. The current trustee election process has served the best interest of Kentucky’s public school teachers and retirees for many years with marked success. The Board of Trustees (a majority of who are elected by active and retired teachers) employs experienced, competent investment consultants to advise them on all matters pertaining to investments and its fiduciary responsibilities.

ITEM III: MAINTAIN KTRS AS A DEFINED BENEFIT GROUP RETIREMENT PLAN FOR ALL KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS.

COMMENT: A retiree cannot outlive his/her pension under a Defined Benefit (DB) Group Retirement plan, unlike a Defined Contribution (DC) Individual Savings account even with a Social Security safety net. Since Kentucky’s retired teachers do not have a Social Security safety net, it is vital that our DB group retirement plan continue. Also, research shows that DC plans are as much as 46 percent more costly than DB plans.

ITEM IV: PROMOTE FULL FUNDING OF KTRS’ ANNUITY AND MEDICAL INSURANCE FUNDS.

COMMENT: Full funding in a timely manner is required to keep the annuity fund in sound fiscal condition. Maintaining the medical insurance fund per HB 540 (Shared Responsibility [enacted in 2010]) requirements is essential to the financial well being of our members. KTRS members are meeting their Shared Responsibility (HB 540) obligations.

ITEM V: OPPOSE STATE TAX REFORM LEGISLATION THAT UNFAIRLY BURDENS KENTUCKY’S PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR RETIREES.

COMMENT: Cutting retirement income by raising the amount of retirement income (all income over \$15,000) subject to state income tax, reducing tax exemptions and increasing tax rates on Social Security income is ill-timed and will unfairly burden Kentucky’s current retirees, who have no time to pivot their retirement strategy.

ITEM VI: SUPPORT LEGISLATION REQUIRING LONG-TERM CARE (LTC) INSURANCE CARRIERS TO SUBMIT RATE INCREASES TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, AS WELL AS THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE, AND ALLOW INTERVENTION BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

COMMENT: During the past seven (7) years, the Kentucky Department of Insurance (KDOI) has permitted huge rate increases (i.e., 111%) by long-term care insurance carriers. The increases are intolerable for individuals on fixed incomes. Unlike auto and homeowner policy holders, LTC policy holders do not have an option to change insurance companies. Copies of requests for other insurance proposed rate increases are forwarded to the Attorney General’s Office when filed with the KDOI.

ITEM VII: SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE AMOUNTS PAID TO SURVIVORS OF ACTIVE CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS AND DISABILITY RETIREES.

(Continued from "Public Pension Issues" page 8)

government pension, did not pay Social Security taxes during the years of government service, and so did not earn entitlement to Social Security benefits for those years.

Trying to repeal GPO & WEP has been going on since 1987. We do not want to come into Social Security. That would be the most destructive act that could happen to us. Diverting contributions to SS would only reduce the amount that goes into investments at KTRS.

GASBE (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) is requiring each pension fund to report what their share of the pension liability would be if the retirement system goes belly up.

Representative Nunes from California introduced a transparency act that says each pension system should have a "risk-free investment." Senator Hatch's SAFE (Secure Annuities for Employee Retirement) Act amends the Internal Revenue Code, with respect to 401(k) plans, to allow employers who do not maintain a qualified retirement plan to establish a starter 401(k) deferral-only arrangement. It allows employers to replace certain pension plans with safe harbor 401(k) plans and eliminates the 10% cap on contributions to automatic 401(k) plans. It revises rules relating to pension plan amendments, discrimination testing, restrictions on hardship distributions, rollovers, forfeitures, notice requirements for new plan participants, and plan terminations.

The FDA just approved a biologic-generic drug. One percent of retirees use biologic drugs. They use 11% of our spending dollars.

Really Bad News

The Arnold Foundation is the biggest threat to our pension plan. In 2010, the Arnolds signed the Giving Pledge, a commitment taken by the world's wealthiest individuals and families to give away half of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes." In 2011, Arnold donated over \$100 million to different causes including the Laura and John Arnold Foundation which they founded. In 2012, they gave away or pledged \$423 million. The Laura and John Arnold Foundation states that it focuses on three main areas: criminal justice, education, and public accountability. Arnold has funded various politically-oriented 501(c)4 organizations, including Engage Rhode Island. Many of these organizations advocate pension fund reform, encourage state and local governments to reduce benefits to workers and to invest assets in riskier investments such as hedge funds. Some have criticized his efforts, saying that hedge fund managers, such as himself, collect generous sums in fees for managing the funds, while the workers are left with reduced pensions. The former Enron oil analyst believes that Define Benefit Plans are unsustainable and will become burdens on taxpayers. Therefore, the Arnold Foundation wants to destroy DB plans and establish Defined Contribution or cash balance plans

Some advice is to stay actively engaged. Your worst enemy is in the mirror. As Tip O'Neal said, "All politics are local."

Be passionate. One committed person can defeat 99 that are uncommitted. Stand up for what you believe.

(Continued from "Convention Report" page 2)

Coverage which would force all future public employees to participate in Social Security. The attack on the retirement security of public employees (i.e., Kentucky retired teachers) continues to increase at an alarming rate. We continue to work at the national level with the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security (CPRS).

In March the KTRS Trustees' Nominating Committee nominated the incumbent "Lay Trustee," Ronald Sanders (Hodgenville) for another term. Mr. Sanders has provided excellent service to both active and retired teachers during his tenure on the Board of Trustees and deserves our support. Wendell Lyons (Louisville) was also nominated as a candidate for the "Lay Trustee" position.

Ali Wright (Lexington) and Keri Meador (Louisville) were nominated as candidates for the "Active Teacher Trustee" position. Both of these individuals appear to be qualified.

In November 2015 Kentucky will elect a governor. Each of us must work hard to see that whoever occupies the governor's office is committed to solving the retirement system's unfunded liability problem and keeping KTRS as a "defined benefit group retirement plan." It is imperative that every one of us knows each candidate's position on KTRS.

Politicians at the federal, state and local levels control our economic environment. This is an incontrovertible fact. We cannot expect others to expend the time and energy to do the hard work of keeping the governor candidates educated on our issues. We must do it. You must do it!

Remember KRTA is bipartisan. We do not endorse candidates or contribute money to political campaigns. We work hard encouraging KRTA members to educate themselves on the feelings and positions of candidates. That said, we can and should be quite partisan about issues that affect us. For example, expecting our Governor, State Representatives and State Senators to fix the unfunded liability problem in the Teachers' Retirement System.

As we move forward, four (4) issues that will impact future teacher retirees and us are: (1) improving the actuarial soundness of KTRS, (2) maintaining KTRS as a "defined benefit group retirement plan," (3) keeping the governance of KTRS as it is presently constituted and (4) avoiding mandated social security. As we continue to build on the excellent relationship we have with Gary Harbin, his staff, and the KTRS Board of Trustees, along with the respect KRTA enjoys with members of the General Assembly, we should be able to meet the challenges ahead.

Our association continues to grow and prosper. To a great degree, the credit for this success belongs to the many dedicated volunteer leaders we have at the local, district and state levels. Many thanks to each of you for your support of our association.



Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/
KentuckyRetiredTeachersAssociation.
Click on the "Like" button

Volunteer of the Year Nominees

| <u>Nominee</u> | <u>District</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| No Nominee | First |
| Peggy Stirsman | Second Hopkins County |
| Willadean Carter | Third Monroe County RTA |
| Gwinn Hahn | Fifth Bullitt County RTA |
| Ernest Taylor | Fourth Marion County RTA |
| No Nominee | Jefferson |
| Rose Lynn Hall | Central KY East Powell County RTA |
| R. Warren Featherston | Central KY West Fayette County RTA |
| Patsy Hamilton | Middle Cumberland Pulaski County RTA |
| Phyllis Kelsch | Northern Pendleton County RTA |
| Frankie Ball | Upper Cumberland Whitley County RTA |
| Elwood Cornett | Upper KY River Letcher County RTA |
| Mary Alice Hunt | Big Sandy Pike County RTA |
| No Nominee | Eastern |

Continued from "Legislative Program" page 11

COMMENT: Benefits paid to survivors of active teachers and disability retirees have not been increased for over eight years and have not kept pace with inflation. Special attention should be paid to the plight of teachers who become disabled in the line of duty (i.e., Fred Capps Memorial Act) with fewer than 27 years of service.

ITEM VIII: OPPOSE EFFORTS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL TO IMPOSE MANDATORY SOCIAL SECURITY ON KTRS MEMBERS AND SUPPORT REPEAL OF THE WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION (WEP) AND THE GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSET (GPO) PENALTIES.

COMMENT: If KTRS contribution rates are reduced by 12.4% so that the combined KTRS and social security rate is maintained at the present level, the benefit actuarial formula for active teachers would have to be reduced from 2.5% to less than 1.0%. The result would greatly reduce overall benefits for current and future teacher retirees. The WEP and GPO penalties are particularly harmful to individuals who make a midcareer decision to become a teacher in Kentucky.

ITEM IX: SUPPORT THE 2016-17 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES OF THE NRTA/AARP STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AND/OR OTHER GROUPS REPRESENTING SENIOR CITIZENS, WHICH ARE NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE POSITION OF KRTA.

COMMENT: Supporting issues of particular interest to retired teachers such as retirement security, predatory lending, increased home and community-based health and living services, and long-term care regulations benefit our members.

Business Partners At Our Convention



Cindy Block Hayden



Rebecca Murrell
LegalLine



Julie Brown



Chris Tyler, Shannon Van Den Elzen and Lynn Groff
United Healthcare



Tammy Clark



Cheryl Collins

Hear In America

Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System



James Beams, Murphy Brock, and Bob Marshall
with Richard Williams in the background!



Nazma Haq



Camille Burgess



Jane Gilbert



Brown & Brown Insurance
Jason Weilage



Kathy Wiederhold



AIR LAND SEA TRAVEL LLC.
Carol Pullen



Rachel Fautz, Leon Morrow and Jane Hartman



Shannon Ledbetter, Jim Curley and Jeff Johnson



Travis Pelley and Dave Farmer



Lucy Wells, R Ph



Ian Graham and Scott Bohnert



Tara Parker and Hank Hensley

INSIDE SCOOP . . .

What's Going On At KRTA

2015 General Assembly:

Despite the outstanding support from the entire education community across Kentucky, House Bill 4 was not passed by the General Assembly. As you know, this was a fiscally responsible solution to restore the financial integrity of the state's teacher retirement plan.

Efforts to shore up the teacher pension system collapsed after negotiations between House and Senate lawmakers failed to reach a compromise. Here is a post session recap on House Bill 4.

- The funding plan proposed in the original version of HB 4 provided a long-term financing plan for the Teachers' Pension Fund. Part of the plan included authorization of a bond in an amount of up to \$3.3 billion. This bond would make it possible for the Commonwealth to slowly phase in over an eight-year period to the full additional contributions needed by the pension fund. The original version of HB 4 specifically provided the phase-in schedule for the Commonwealth to follow to accomplish full funding. Therefore, the funding plan was not a short-term fix. Any statements to the contrary are erroneous.

- The debt service to pay for the bond would be provided by existing revenue streams that are already in the current budget. These two streams together equal approximately \$233 million per year. These existing revenue streams are sufficient to cover the debt service for the bond. Any statements to the contrary are erroneous.

- The dollars needed for the debt service on the bond are already in the current budget that is also providing teacher and state employee raises. Therefore, the debt service on the bond will not preclude future raises in upcoming budgets. Without the funding plan contemplated by HB 4, the Commonwealth will need to pay an additional approximate amount of \$200 million per year to the Teachers' Pension Fund. This would make future raises for teachers and state employees less likely.

- A \$3.3 billion bond could be sold in fairly short order and on a schedule that makes the funding plan of HB 4 work. Governor's budget staff said a

\$3.3 billion bond could be sold in three separate issues with an initial issue of up to \$1.5 billion in 6-9 months, followed by another issue of up to \$1.2 billion in 4-6 months, with a final issue in another 6 months. Waiting until the 2016 session to issue a bond delays its progress by at least another 12-13 months with the real likelihood that interest rates will rise in the interim making the bond sale more expensive for the Commonwealth. Delay only makes the solution more expensive. Governor's budget staff did not say that the bond idea was unrealistic or otherwise not feasible, and any statements to the contrary are erroneous. Governor's budget staff said the bond issue could be done.

- \$3.3 billion is certainly a large bond, but it's small in comparison to the bigger issue of the \$14 billion unfunded liability of the pension fund that is growing each year that it is not addressed.

- A bond helps address an existing debt of the Commonwealth (the unfunded liability of the pension fund) by paying for it (and its liabilities that accrue at 7.5% per year) at a much lower rate that is available under today's historically low interest rates. The private sector, companies like Apple, Microsoft and Exxon Mobil recognizes the opportunity provided by the low interest rates and has been taking advantage of that opportunity by issuing many billions of dollars in bonds.

- There is risk that there could be another market downturn like the 2008 Great Recession following the bond issue, but there is certainty for teachers, taxpayers and the Commonwealth, that if additional funding is not provided soon the pension fund needs will grow too large to be addressed without very great difficulty, pain and cost. Even if there is a significant market downturn, a bond helps de-risk the portfolio as a large cash infusion now would help preserve existing assets that would otherwise have to be sold just to meet the monthly retirement payroll. In fact, KTRS is already in negative cash flow and needs a large cash infusion just to avoid selling assets.

- The bond rating agencies are telling the Commonwealth that the Teachers' Pension Fund is the number one issue

facing the state and that it must be dealt with else market downgrades are likely. Although the issuance of a large bond could also lead to a market downgrade, this risk can be somewhat mitigated with a long-term financing plan as contemplated by the original version of HB 4. Either with or without the bond, there is credit rating downgrade risk, but it is certain that the risk with the bond rating agencies is much greater if the Commonwealth does not get its financial house in order with the Teachers' Pension Fund.

- There are a variety of reasons for the unfunded liability of the pension fund. The lingering effects of an historic downturn in the investment market with the 2000 tech/dot.com bubble and the 2008 Great Recession were the current primary cause of the unfunded liability as of June 30, 2013. As we recover from the Great Recession and the markets have rebounded, however, the percentage of the unfunded liability attributable to the markets grows less while the continued lack of additional funding needed by the pension fund grows more.

- KTRS investments have done very well following the Great Recession with returns among the top in the nation. KTRS investment fees are also among the lowest in the nation.

- The Commonwealth has generally provided the required fixed employer contribution rate of 13.105%.

- While this fixed rate was sufficient for years, it became insufficient for the first time during the 2006-2008 budget biennium. An additional \$42 million on top of the 13.105% was needed for those two years to maintain the retirement system on an actuarially sound basis. It was provided in that budget, but the additional funding needed since then has not been available. Certainly, given the Great Recession, finite revenue and challenging budgets, additional funding has been difficult to find, but with each budget that additional needed funding is not provided the issue becomes much more difficult to address.

- The Commonwealth issued a bond in the amount of \$467 million in 2010 to repay in full the borrowings from the pension fund that were used temporarily to continue retired teacher health insurance. There are no other borrowed funds owed by the Commonwealth to the pension fund.

- The problem is the unfunded liability, and not the normal cost of the retirement plan which is very

modest, especially for a Social Security replacement plan. KTRS members and the Commonwealth through their contributions are already fully and easily paying the normal cost of the retirement plan. Therefore, the issue is not systemic or structural problems with the existing plan. There is no simple trick that suddenly makes this problem go away. A study of the retirement system is fine, but any truly independent expert is going to find that funding is the issue. KTRS was studied in 2007 by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Employees' Pensions, in 2008 by the Public Pension Working Groups (there was also reform legislation in 2008 that reduced benefits), in 2008 and 2012 by the legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee, and furthermore, KTRS is audited every year, including a 2014 year-long audit by the state Auditor of Public Accounts that concluded that KTRS is well-managed.

- The need for funding the Teachers' Pension Fund is immediate and cannot wait. KTRS will sell approximately \$600 million in assets this fiscal year and \$700 million next fiscal year and this number will continue to grow and the pension fund will continue to become destabilized without additional funding. Without dollars to pay for teachers' retirements, how can they be provided regardless of statutory guarantees and public assurances otherwise?

- The projected additional funding needs for the pension fund that will be sent to the Governor's office in just a few months for the FY 2016-2018 budget will total almost \$1 billion. Where will this funding come from without a bond? Given the still-recovering economy and finite revenue, recent budgets have been too tight to provide even smaller amounts of needed additional funding.

- This problem is not going away, it is only growing worse and harder to solve each year that it is not addressed. No other option that seriously deals with the problem has been offered.

Bob Wagoner
KRTA Executive Director



Membership = 30,000+

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2015 FALL WORKSHOPS TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

| DISTRICT | DATE | PLACE | CONTACT PERSON |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Jefferson County | Fri Aug 28 10:00 AM (ET) | U of L Alumni Club Louisville | Rick Tatum 7810 St Anthony Woods Louisville, KY 40214-4408 (502) 937-5190 |
| Central Ky East | Mon Aug 31 9:00 AM (ET) | Natural Bridge State Pk. Slade | Thelma Blair 1560 Peytons Well Road Stanford, KY 40484-9316 606-669-0870 |
| Central Ky West | Tues Sept 1 9:00 AM (ET) | Thomas & King Conf. Ctr. Georgetown | Laura Gray PO Box 3098 Midway, KY 40347 859-846-5652 |
| Northern | Wed Sept 2 9:00 AM (ET) | Triple Crown C'try Club Union | Loretta Flerlage 1000 Independence Pike Dry Ridge, KY 41035-6811 (859) 824-4882 |
| Fifth | Thurs Sept 3 9:15 AM (ET) | Aquatic Center Buckner | Shirley Sills 2121 Hieatt Lane Smithfield, KY 40068 502-845-7290 |
| First | Mon Sept 14 9:00 AM (CT) | Kenlake State Park Hardin | Sandra Rudolph 415 Barnett Road Eddyville, KY 42038 (270) 388-9375 |
| Second | Tues Sept 15 9:00 AM (CT) | TBA Hopkinsville. | Scotty Parsons 18015 Collins Bridge Road Dawson Springs, KY 42408-9235 (270) 797-5009 |
| Fourth | Wed Sept 16 8:30 AM (CT) 9:30 AM (ET) | Tourism/Conv. Bureau Elizabethtown | Bill Kelley 904 Dogwood Drive Elizabethtown, KY 42701-2147 (270) 737-7742 |
| Third | Thurs Sept 17 9:00 AM (CT) | Barren River State Park Lucas | Romanza Johnson 3441 Cemetery Road Bowling Green, KY 42103 270-842-3416 |
| Middle Cumberland | Mon Sept 21 8:30 AM (CT) 9:30 AM (ET) | Dale Hollow State Park Burkesville | Shirley Dick Wolf 216 Pogue Drive Somerset, KY 42503-4158 606-875-3321 |
| Upper Cumberland | Tues Sept 22 8:30 AM (ET) | Pine Mountain State Park Pineville | Mary Susan Hale 1203 Gloucester Avenue Middlesboro, KY 40965-2210 606-248-6660 |
| Upper Ky River | Wed Sept 23 8:30 AM (ET) | Buckhorn State Park Buckhorn | Charlotte Ditty 111 State Drive Jackson, KY 41339-9650 606-666-5253 |
| Big Sandy | Thurs Sept 24 9:00 AM (ET) | Jenny Wiley State Park Prestonsburg | Darrell Clark 577 Collins Creek Warfield, KY 41267-9303 606-395-6222 |
| Eastern | Fri Sept 25 9:00 AM (ET) | Carter Caves State Park Olive Hill | Ann Porter 3065 Augusta Dover Road Augusta, KY 41002-9001 606-584-2510 |

**All workshops start times are local time.
 Registration begins 30 minutes prior to start time.**

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Deceased Retired Teachers

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2015

“. . .these immortal dead who live again in minds made better by their presence . . .”

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