



Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel

Volume 60, Issue 4

The Meadowlark

April 2025

CONVENTION NEWS STARTS ON PAGE 4 OF THIS ISSUE. BE SURE TO CHECK THIS OUT AND JOIN THE CONVENTION IN JUNE.

FEBRUARY 2025 IN TOPEKA

With the change of date for Pack the Capitol, there were not as many people who were going to be there. Thanks to those who did come and wore the green COLA sign. Attendees first met on the second floor and heard Ernie Claudel and Minority Leader speak about our concerns. Some then visited their representatives and senators. At 11:00 a.m., members met in the House while they were in session. Thanks to those who did come. For those of you who were not there, please contact your senators and representatives in any way possible to offer your opinion and what you need. Do this early and often!



UNIT NEWS

Scholarships are a common theme as units continue to support the education of our communities.

The Manhattan Area unit learned about book censorship. They are working with high school counselors with information about their scholarship. In addition, they took a collection for Flint Hills Bread Basket and items for the Manhattan Sunset Zoo. Thanks to Greg Mann for sharing this information with the Meadowlark.

Wyandotte County had a baked potato bar for their March meeting and their speaker spoke about the controversy regarding the ownership of Shawnee Mission. This unit continues to collect money for scholarships and they also collect Best Choice labels. Thanks to Nancy Warren for sharing their newsletter.

Emporia Area had an interesting visitor at their March meeting. Mrs. William Allen White (Sally) showed up to visit while on her way to meet Will at the train depot. Barb Fowler does a wonderful portrayal of Mrs. White and the unit learned quite a bit of the history of the White family. In March and April this unit emphasizes scholarship drives, and although they drop money in the scholarship jar each month, the donations are larger in these two months. They participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade along with ENEA and Educators Rising.



SUMMER IS COMING

*Jerry Henn
KARSP Executive
Director*



Summer is a season of warmth, adventure, and relaxation, bringing joy in countless ways. The longer days and bright sunshine create the perfect environment for outdoor fun, whether it's a trip to Kansas City, a hike through the neighborhood, or simply lounging in the backyard with a good book. The carefree atmosphere of summer allows people to break away from their usual routines, encouraging spontaneity and exploration. With school out and vacations in full swing, it's a time for families and friends to reconnect and create lasting memories.

One of the greatest joys of summer is the abundance of fresh, seasonal foods. Farmers' markets overflow with ripe fruits and vegetables, from juicy watermelons to sweet berries and crisp corn on the cob. Backyard barbecues and picnics in the park become common traditions, filling the air with the delicious aroma of grilled meats and refreshing lemonade. Ice cream trucks and homemade popsicles offer sweet relief from the heat, making every bite a moment of simple pleasure.

Summer also brings the excitement of outdoor activities and sports. Whether it's swimming in a cool lake, playing a game of golf, or taking a leisurely bike ride through the neighborhood, there are endless opportunities to stay active and have fun. The warm weather encourages people to embrace nature, from camping under the stars to fishing by a

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or visit us at www.karsp.org



STRENGTH IN UNITY

peaceful river. Even something as simple as an evening stroll becomes magical when the fireflies begin to twinkle in the twilight.

Another delight of summer is the opportunity for travel and exploration. Road trips, international adventures, and weekend getaways allow people to experience new places and cultures. Amusement parks, festivals, and concerts add excitement to the season, providing entertainment for all ages. Whether it's a thrilling ride on a roller coaster or dancing at an outdoor music festival, (yes you can still dance), summer offers a sense of freedom and exhilaration that is hard to match at any other time of the year.

Perhaps the most cherished joy of summer is the feeling of relaxation and happiness it brings. Without the stress of heavy workloads, people can take the time to slow down and enjoy life's little pleasures. Watching a sunset while on vacation over the ocean, lying in a hammock with a gentle breeze, or simply spending quality time with loved ones makes summer truly special. It is a season of warmth, laughter, and unforgettable experiences, leaving behind memories that last a lifetime.

Enjoy this coming summer and let it fulfill your dreams.

LEGISLATIVE THOUGHTS

Ernie Claudel

KARSP Legislative Chair

Faye Kennedy worked to keep HB238, which calls for a \$150/month KPERs Benefit increase for those over 85 years of age. This bill is an Exempt Bill, so it could yet be heard this year.

The Senate Bill which I previously warned about (SB282) is likely caught in a

“permanent stall” for this session. This is a carryover year and will be around for another session in some form. While this bill is very unlikely to have an impact on your benefit, it certainly could negatively impact any chance of a COLA.

- Short explanation: If this was adopted, Tier III would likely be “fixed” and that is what the most concern is voiced about. Since any benefit increase would cost some bucks, in its present form the legislature would likely ignore any change.
- Adoption would erase the pension from the three-legged stool for any new employee. That would leave an employee with Social Security and 401K type retirement funds.
- The retiree would then have to choose their retirement date when the market was up. If they wanted to have a lifetime benefit, they would have to then buy an annuity. To my knowledge, no annuity provides an increasing payment (COLA) option.
- Since the main desire for an improvement in Tier III is to improve “Recruitment and Retention,” the options provided in SB282 make no improvement on this need!
- The states that have done away with pensions for a 401K type have either had to go back to a defined benefit type of plan (West Virginia) or like Alaska become the “poster child” on why not to make this change.
- We must be vigilant and prepared.

WE URGE YOU TO VOTE FOR ERNIE CLAUDEL AS A BOARD MEMBER FOR KPERs! HIS PASSION AND DEDICATION ARE NEEDED ON THAT BOARD.

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS CAN BE FOUND ON THE BACK PAGE OF THIS MEADOWLARK.

CONVENTION INFORMATION!

The Marriott Hotel has been sold to Sonesta Essential, however they did honor the contract that was signed in 2023. With the sale of the hotel there have been some changes/modifications. A contract does not speak to meals other than we must meet a requirement for food and beverages, which includes the four meals during the convention. With the cost of food rising all the time, we negotiated the cost the best that we could.

A block of rooms has been scheduled for the convention and reservations must be made through the hotel, not on-line, by May 27 to receive the quoted room rate of \$97 plus tax. If the deadline date is not met, you will not receive this rate. There are no exceptions. When making your reservations, please let them know you are attending the KARSP convention. The number to call is 1-785-210-1500 and is also printed on the convention registration form.

When completing the registration form, make sure all boxes are marked. A paid ticket will be required to attend the Wednesday night hamburger feed. This ticket will be provided for you when you pick up your convention materials at the registration table located in the foyer of the convention center. The deadline for convention registration is May 27 also, and there are no exceptions as hotel must have a meal count to serve all. All meals are buffet style due to staff shortages.

Help make the registrar smile. Please get your registration forms to Jay Brown as soon as possible. Do not wait for the deadline of May 27. If you are registering on a voucher from your unit, be sure to use the proper voucher registration form. Otherwise, your registration will be returned to you. Checks are held for a time and sent in groups to the treasurer in Great Bend. If you wish to check about a registration, email Jay Brown, Registrar, at

bengal@southwind.net. Thanks again for your help in making the registration process run smoothly.

Remember: We do not have control over the temperatures in the meeting rooms. The rooms can be chilly for some, and it is suggested that you bring a sweater or jacket for your comfort.

If you have any questions regarding the convention, please contact:

Karen Pulaski, Convention Chair
kkpulaski1@gmail.com
316-836-3532

SPEAKERS AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR CONVENTION

JILL HAUKOS

Jill is the Director of Education at the Konza Prairie Biological Station. She runs the Konza Environmental Education Program that works to connect area K-12 school children to their ecosystem, the tallgrass prairie. She hails from South Dakota where she received a degree in Wildlife Biology from South Dakota University and then moved with her husband to Texas. While there, she earned a Master's degree in environmental education from Texas Tech and taught biology at a local community college. Since moving to Kansas, Jill has worked to bring thousands of kids to the prairie to show how beautiful and interesting their ecosystem is.

BILL NELSON

Bill Nelson works as a STEM educational consultant, assisting teachers and students in schools across the country by implementing science activities that enhance learning by bringing scientific principles to life. He retired from a career in education that included 24 years as a high school science teacher and coach



2025 CONVENTION SCHEDULE

June 11-13

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

10:00 a.m. - KARSP Board Meeting

1:00 p.m. - Registration and Hospitality Opens

5:00 p.m. - Hamburger Feed and Foundation Auction

8:00 p.m. - Games

THURSDAY, JUNE 12

8:45 a.m. - Opening Session

9:20 a.m. - Speaker - Jill Haukos

10:15 -10:35 a.m. - Break

10:35 a.m. - Business Meeting

11:30 a.m. - Foundation Luncheon

1:15 p.m. - Speaker - Bill Nelson

1:45 p.m. - Speaker - Dr. Virleen Carlson

2:15 p.m. - Free time to visit with friends

2:30 p.m. - Foundation Board Meeting

6:00 p.m. - Evening Dinner and Entertainment (The Charades)

8:00 p.m. - Games

FRIDAY, JUNE 13

8:30 a.m. - Memorial Breakfast

9:45 a.m. - Unit Awards

10:30 a.m. - Open time for checking out and loading vehicles

11:30 a.m. - Luncheon

End of convention

and 10 years in school administration. He has worked in the following Kansas High Schools during his career: Buhler, Moundridge, Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic, Southeast of Saline, and Smoky Valley in Lindsborg. As a high school science teacher, he taught a variety of courses to over 3,000 high school students, including Advanced Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, General Science, Leadership, Life Science, and Principles of Technology. His coaching career included basketball, football, tennis, and track with head coaching high school basketball and tennis. Entering secondary school administration, he served in the following roles: assistant principal/athletic director, charter school director, and high school principal. Bill is a graduate of Bethany College in Lindsborg, KS with a BA in secondary Science Education. He earned an MEd in school administration from Wichita State University. Bill and his wife live in Lindsborg, KS.

**DR. VIRLEEN CARLSON/
MAMIE EISENHOWER**

Dr. Virleen Carlson from Junction City received her PhD from Kansas State University in curriculum and instruction. Dr. Carlson completed 15 years as a high school speech, English, drama, and journalism teacher, followed by 20 years in higher education (including Cornell University). Her husband David is also retired after 35 years teaching instrumental music.

Dr. Carlson does a portrayal of Mamie Eisenhower which is Virleen's hobby in retirement. It is said that retirement is a time to re-invent one's self, so Virleen decided to come back as somebody famous. Mamie Eisenhower was chosen because Virleen's daughter volunteered at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.

THE CHARADES

The Charades is a barbershop quartet affiliated with the International Barbershop Society.

They were formed in 1978 and have been active ever since. Personnel have changed several times over the years with their tenor Ken Garwick, the only remaining original member. The other members are Steve McKensie, lead, Tom Fish, and Leonard Purvis, bass.

**MEMORIES OF
CONVENTION 2024**

We hope you will be a part of Convention 2025!



CONVENTION REGISTRATION

73rd KARSP CONVENTION
June 11, 12 and 13, 2025
Sonesta Essential Hotel
310 Hammons Drive
Junction City Kansas 66441
1-785-210-1500

All members are urged to attend and are eligible to vote at the annual convention. Spouses are welcome to attend any session with paid registrations.

You must make reservations through the Sonesta Essential Hotel, 1-785-210-1500, to receive the \$97.00 (plus, tax rate). The cutoff date for reservations is May 27, 2025 to receive the quoted rate. After cutoff date, no guarantee of availability of rooms. When making reservation mention KARSP. If special needs are required, please indicate to the hotel at the time of placing your room reservation.

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

| DESCRIPTION | # | AMOUNT | TOTAL |
|--|---|---------|-------|
| Registration Deadline (<u>MAY 27, 2025</u>) | | \$20.00 | |
| Wednesday Evening meal-- Tickets will be required. Foundation Auction Following | | \$12.00 | |
| Thursday Breakfast On Your Own | | ---- | ---- |
| Thursday Luncheon | | \$24.00 | = |
| Thursday Evening Dinner | | \$30.00 | = |
| Friday Breakfast | | \$17.00 | = |
| Friday Luncheon | | \$24.00 | = |
| TOTAL | | | \$ |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Make check payable to: KARSP Convention Fund Mail to: Jay Brown, Registrar 511 East 24th, Hutchinson, KS 67502 E-mail bengal@southwind.net To see if your registration has been received, please email Jay at the above email address.</p> | <p>Make your own reservations at: Sonesta Essential Hotel Junction City, Kansas 66441 Reservations: 1-785-210-1500 Group Rate: \$97.00 + tax</p> |
|---|---|

APRIL 2025

HOW TO CAST YOUR VOTE FOR ERNIE CLAUDEL FOR THE KPERS BOARD

The voting period for this election is the month of April 2025, beginning on April 1st. Voting instructions are provided below. Additional information on the vote is available in the following ways.

1. At KSPERS.gov, then click on 2025 Board Election.
2. Via a letter you will receive. This is talked about in 2 below.
3. Soon to arrive The KPERS Newsletter “Vested Interest.”

You will receive a letter in March which will provide you with precise information on how to vote.

1. You can vote online: Starting April 1, you can vote on your online account at member.kspers.gov. If you don't already have an account, please contact our InfoLine at 1-888-275-5737 to gain access to enroll as a new user. (Please note, the KPERS website has changed slightly. It is now www.kspers.gov)
2. By Phone: You will receive a letter later this month with your phone voting PIN and instructions for voting by phone. You may also contact the InfoLine to request your pin.
3. Cast a Paper Ballot: Please contact the InfoLine to request a paper ballot. Keep in mind, you must request a paper ballot by April 15, 2025, to be eligible. Completed ballots must be postmarked by April 30, 2025, to be valid.