



Welcome to **eNEWS**, the **PMEA Retired Member Network**... an informal alliance and forum for interconnecting retired music educators, and sharing their ideas, stories, successes, news, and views. Thank you for staying involved in PMEA and our profession!

**Alert! Do you know what happens next week? April Fools! (No, foolin')**

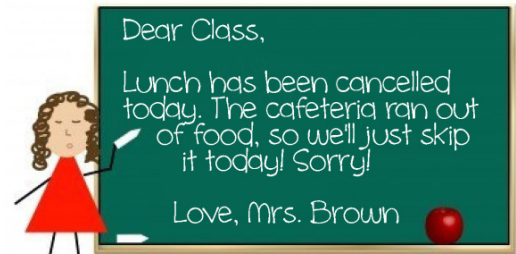
Although not recommended, this one blew me away: **"Music Teacher Owns Entire Class..."**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dbf-K3Mzffs>

Even though you are no longer teaching full-time, would you have done these?

**"April Fool's Day Jokes for Music Teachers"**  
<http://funmusicco.com/april-fools-day-jokes-for-music-teachers/>

Where were these when I was teaching?  
**"7 April Fools' Pranks for Teachers That Will Melt the Minds of Students"**

<https://www.weareteachers.com/7-april-fools-pranks-for-teachers-that-will-melt-the-minds-of-students/>



<https://squareheadteachers.com/2013/03/28/teachers-april-fools-day-pranks/>

Even the Kings College Choir got into the "spirit" of April Fools!  
**"King's College Choir Announces Major Change..." (Allegri's Miserere)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukDAFF0-8q8>

Did you see these from Warner Classics? Are these "alternative facts" or "fake news?"  
**"Real Life Classics: A New Series for Situations Music-Lovers Face Every Day"**  
<http://www.warnerclassics.com/warner-classics/news/1236>

Attention all composers: You could be replaced by a... dog!  
**"Miller Theatre Announces New Series: Canine Composers..."**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9b8VtpDLHfc>

Not to leave opera enthusiasts out of these pranks...  
**"Sweden Uses Science to Create a Future Generation of Opera Singers"**  
<http://www.warnerclassics.com/warner-classics/news/1236>

From the highly-respected George Lucas Educational Foundation - Edutopia  
**"April Fool's Day in the Classroom: 8 Resources for Teachers"**  
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/april-fools-classroom-ideas-matt-davis>

My own: This nearly gave me a heart-attack! **"The Day SHJO Mysteriously Disappeared!"**  
A half hour before my South Hills Junior Orchestra practice, I found the players getting ready for their rehearsal in the Band Room. I went to my office in the Choral Room to check messages, and ten minutes later returned... **the entire orchestra vanished!** Led by their student officers, the musicians had hidden themselves on stage in the dark and yelled "April Fools" when I walked to the stage door.





## **Two political perspectives... encouraging you to become an arts advocate!** **From SB&O: "Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Backward"**

by Mike Lawson, Executive Editor (September 13, 2017): [READ MORE AT](http://sbomagazine.com/current-issue/1444-perspective/5692-three-steps-forward-two-steps-back.html)  
<http://sbomagazine.com/current-issue/1444-perspective/5692-three-steps-forward-two-steps-back.html>

"Some disturbing news is making its way across the country on a couple of fronts that directly impact music educators, those in the arts, and parents of those with disabilities.

"Your jobs, your calling in life, are threatened by a mentality that thinks that you, your system, your administration, are failures, and can't be 'fixed...' The problem, as I see it, is that when you have people in charge of your program at the federal level, who believe passionately that you're teaching in an 'industry' and 'closed market' as a 'monopoly,' who are constantly trying to conflate private business practices with public services, you're going to get people who want to prove the system is broken by breaking it some more.

"Couple all of this with plans to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts, PBS, and other programs that support our enormously rich cultural heritage while serving the people of this country fundamentally necessary music, arts and related educational programming and resources, and we're looking at a new direction that could have a devastating impact on education, and music education in particular.

"This is not and should not be about partisan politics. This is an American issue. This is now a battle for your students, your programs, your funding, your jobs, and our future. The voice of music teachers, either collectively through their unions, or individually through their own means, has never been more critical. It's time for vigilance, speaking up, and making sure we don't see funding slashed, programs cut, teaching positions eliminated, and music education downsized for another generation to come."

## **From Phi Delta Kappa: "Pick Up the Phone – Now!"**

by Joan Richardson, Editor-in-Chief, *Kappan Magazine* (March 2017): [READ MORE AT](http://www.kappanonline.org/pick-up-the-phone/)  
<http://www.kappanonline.org/pick-up-the-phone/>



"Regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, there can be no question that we have moved into an era that requires the attention of every citizen. Although the new team in Washington has made many public statements about what they believe, we are still learning exactly what they will do as public servants. That means that all of us have an opportunity to guide them as they find their way in the world of public policy.

"As the Every Student Succeeds Act pushes more decisions into the hands of state and local decision makers, your attention and involvement is more imperative than ever. I urge [you] to step up and ensure that your elected representatives and their appointees know where you stand on questions related to public education."

Richardson provides some excellent insight on political activism: "Decide what sources of information are credible," "find allies," "know your state rep," "communicate with your local school board," "say thanks - or not," and "keep the pressure on!"

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## Transition to Retirement Can Leave People Feeling Unmoored!

by John Przybys, *Las Vegas Review-Journal* [Click here for the entire article.](#)

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/life/transition-retirement-can-leave-people-feeling-unmoored>

When the Rev. Jerry Blankinship retired as chaplain at Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center, it felt right.

"I had worked for almost 50 years in one pastoral ministry or another and 32 years at Sunrise as chaplain," says Blankinship, 78, who even had waited until he was almost 75 to retire because, at 65, "I didn't feel like retiring at all."



"But I just felt - I don't know how to put it, except to say that enough is enough. It was time."

So, just more than 2½ years ago, Blankinship retired. Two months later, he began to feel physically and mentally exhausted. Adrift. Depressed.

All about doing something millions of American worker bees dream about, the good Lord and Social Security willing, doing themselves someday.

It turns out that retirement can be a tough transition, at least for some prospective retirees, and Blankinship's reaction to the prospect of days upon months upon years of clock-less free time isn't uncommon.

The problem often begins when prospective retirees think of retirement only in terms of subtraction, by eliminating the responsibilities of a job from their lives but not thinking about what they might replace it with.

"I think a lot of it is people often want to get off the treadmill, they want to get out of the grind," says Dr. Lisa Rosenberg, a geriatrics specialist and assistant professor of medicine at Touro University Nevada College of Osteopathic Medicine. "But, for many people, their plan is not to do anything, and that's not good for us physically or mentally."

Inactivity can make retirees "prone to depression" and diminish "cognition, our ability to think and remember and process," she says. "Our brains are like anything else: We lose our abilities if we don't continue to use what we have."

Generally speaking - and ignoring the issue of money, which, alone, can go a long way toward shaping a retirement - "the people who are most successful in retirement... are people who have a plan of what to do with their time," Rosenberg says. [READ MORE...](#)

### Recent paulkfoxusc blogs about PMEA or retirement



- <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2017/03/17/pet-ownership-&-retirement/>
- <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2017/03/05/the-pmea-state-conference-primer/>
- <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2017/02/13/how-retirement-has-changed-me/>
- <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2016/12/15/pmea-in-retirement-whats-in-it-for-me/>

Different strokes for different folks... This is what my dogs Gracie (sacked out) and Brewster do when I turn on Classical Music!

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**Coping with loss – resources to help you bring back happiness and stability**

In my upcoming session presentation at the 55<sup>th</sup> Biennial NAFME Eastern Division, "Living the Dream – Survival and Celebration of Retirement," I will briefly touch on the psychological problems of involuntary job departures, "forced" retirements, and even leaving the profession early when one is afraid of losing contractual benefits or the downsizing of the music program.

In every retirement and other major life-style transition or changing status, there are common emotions through which all of us go, individually unique in intensity and duration:

- Excitement
- Joy
- Freedom
- Accomplishment
- Peace of Mind
- Optimism
- Ambivalence
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Pessimism



The emotional baggage of being "downsized and out" or other compulsory transfers or "cuts" may precipitate the well-known **stages of loss or grief** (the same phases you would experience for a divorce or the death of a loved one!):

1. **Denial** (disbelief, numbness, shock)
2. **Bargaining** (preoccupation with "what could have been," guilt, remorse)
3. **Depression** (sadness, loneliness, emptiness, isolation, self-pity)
4. **Anger** (feelings of helplessness, abandonment)
5. **Acceptance** (emotional resolution, healing)

There are two important points to bring out. One, a lot of this is *normal*, and everyone should expect to go through some emotional upheaval with both planned and unplanned retirements. However, if you find yourself suddenly having trouble sleeping, difficulty with relationships, or feeling significantly depressed or lethargic, visit your health care professional immediately. No one cannot self-diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder.

Here are several online resources to read about this subject:

- <http://lifelhacker.com/nine-things-you-should-and-shouldnt-do-if-you-lose-you-509536697>
- <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/job-loss-and-unemployment-stress.htm>

I also recommend visiting life coach Jennifer Scott's website (<http://spiritfinder.org/>) who was generous in sending us her research of these links, appropriate for all stages of life:

- [How Grief Can Make You Sick](#)
- [How to Help an Elderly Parent Deal with the Death of a Spouse](#)
- [Advice for Surviving the Death of a Spouse or Partner at a Young Age](#)
- [Coping with the Death of Your Pet](#)

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**Volunteer spots needed filled for PMEA Info Booth in Erie**

Our appreciation and thanks go to those of you who have responded to help at the spring conference. By the time you read this eNEWS, the schedules for presiding chairs should be finalized. We hope more of you who are going to Erie can serve "manning" the PMEA Info Booth for an hour or more. "The plan" is to schedule two retirees or PCMEA members per slot (\* = we have one volunteer already): Thursday 10:30, Noon, 1:30, 3:00, or 4:30, Friday 8:15, 9:45, 11:15, 12:45 or 2:15. Please email [paulkfox.usc@gmail.com](mailto:paulkfox.usc@gmail.com).

In addition, you can still RSVP your intention of attending the Retired Member Breakfast on April 21 at 7 a.m. to the above retired member coordinator's email.

**Still need to hear from you! What are your hobbies?**

For an upcoming article, can you send me your favorite pastimes or diversions? Who is scrapbooking, collecting antiques, riding mountain bikes, snorkeling, family tree finding, rappelling, DJ-ing, caving, playing ultimate frisbee, edible mushroom hunting, performing stand-up comedy, dancing... what?

Take a moment and respond to your retired member coordinator's request for a description of your retiree pursuits. And if you have one, share a picture of you "doing" your hobby. Who knows? It might end up in *PMEA News*... just to make those full-time "working stiffs" jealous of the extra time retirees now have to devote to the things they really love! Email: [paulkfox.usc@gmail.com](mailto:paulkfox.usc@gmail.com). Deadline: **May 2017**.

**Final days of Music in Our Schools Month – but music lasts all year long!**

*from the Arts Ed Digest Vo. 9, No. 5 of the Arts Education Partnership*

The National Association for Music Education [and PMEA are] sponsoring Music in Our Schools Month (MIOSM) in March to help draw attention to high-quality music education programs across the country [and across PA]. Key MIOSM highlights are a [Music in Our Schools Tour](#), co-sponsored by the Give a Note Foundation and Radio Disney, featuring music programs in a sponsored community concert and the largest school choir concert in the world, giving thousands of young singers the chance to sing together. Follow using the hashtag #MIOSM. [Click Here for More](#)



**Happy trails, retirees.** Send me more "stuff!" "Are we having fun, yet?" Take care! PKF

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