



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. Next week is **Valentine's Day**, so don't forget to share it with your loved ones! Thank you for staying involved in PMEA and our profession!

**Love is no joking matter... but, pass it on!**

*Reader's Digest* Valentine's Day Jokes: <http://www.rd.com/jokes/valentines-day-jokes/>

My high-school English teacher was well known for being a fair, but hard, grader. One day I received a B minus on a theme paper. In hopes of bettering my grade and in the spirit of the valentine season, I sent her an extravagant heart-shaped box of chocolates with the pre-printed inscription: "BE MINE." The following day, I received in return a valentine from the teacher. It read: "Thank you, but it's still BE MINE-US." —Contributed by Brad Wilcox



**What did the guy with the broken leg say to his nurse?** "I've got a crutch on you."

**What did one boat say to the other?** "Are you up for a little row-mance?"

During World War II my parents had planned a romantic Valentine's Day wedding. Suddenly my father, then stationed at Camp Edwards in Massachusetts, received orders to prepare to ship out, and all leaves were canceled. Being a young man in love, he went AWOL. He and my mother were married four days earlier than originally planned and he returned to base to an angry sergeant. After hearing the explanation, the sergeant understandingly replied, "Okay, okay!" Then, as an afterthought: "But don't let it happen again!" —Contributed by Sandra L. Caron

As Valentine's Day approached, I tried to think of an unusual gift for my husband. When I discovered that his favorite red-plaid pants had a broken zipper, I thought I had the "perfect Valentine." I had the pants repaired, and gift-wrapped them. On the package, I put a huge red heart on which I printed: "My Heart Pants for You." I was surprised, however, when I saw the same heart taped to our formerly empty, but now overflowing, wood box. On it he had written: "Wood You Be My Valentine?" —Contributed by Mary Lou Pittman

**Knock! Knock! Who's there? Olive.** Olive who? **Olive you and I don't care who knows it!**



Every Valentine's Day our campus newspaper has a section for student messages. Last year my roommate surprised his girlfriend with roses and dinner at a fancy restaurant. When they returned from their date, she leafed through the paper to see if he had written a note to her. Near the bottom of one page she found: "Bonnie—What are you looking here for? Aren't dinner and flowers enough? Love, Scott." —Contributed by Richard B. Blackwell





## Need something unique to add to your “bucket list?”

<https://personalexcellence.co/blog/bucket-list/>

I doubt any of us lack the imagination to find new things to pursue or try for the first time. However, if you glance at Celestine (“Celes”) Chua’s list of **“What’s on Your Bucket List? 101 Things to Do Before You Die,”** you can’t help wondering, “Will there be enough hours in a day, days in the week, weeks in a year, and years in my retirement to even make a dent on the possibilities? Her explanation, “If you don’t have a bucket list, I highly recommend you to create one. How much will it cost? Zero. How long will it take? Probably 30 minutes to an hour, or more if you get really caught up in the writing. What do you stand to gain? Significant clarity and focus on what you want from your life. It’s an invaluable exchange.”



Here are a several samples from her website:

1. **Travel all around the world** - Celes shares numerous links on travel recommendations (e.g. [“Lonely Planet’s Best in Travel”](#) and [“1000 Places to See Before You Die”](#)), low cost and free accommodations, packing tips, etc.
14. **Learn [or re-familiarize yourself with] a strategy game** - On family game night last weekend, I was thoroughly “thumped” on Chinese checkers by the parent of one of my youth orchestra oboe players... she taught me *real* Chinese strategy!
15. **Connect with past teachers** - Her rationale: Our teachers are “crucial educators who impart important knowledge — and life skills — to us during our early ages when we were the most impressionable. They ensured that we would be on the right path as we entered pre-adolescence, adolescence, and subsequently adulthood... Think about your past teachers in junior school, high school, and tertiary education. Find ways to get back in touch with them. Let them know how they have touched your life.”
20. **Be a mentor to someone** - “Many communities are always looking for volunteer mentors, so check with your local community programs for such opportunities. At the same time, is there anyone you know who can benefit from being mentored by you? Extend your hand to help — who knows, it may well be what he/she needs at this moment!”
21. **Pursue your passion** - She shares her blog-site’s exercise: [“Discover Your Life Purpose in the Next 30 Minutes.”](#)
17. & 18. My personal favorites: **Perform a kind deed without expecting anything in return**, and **Make a difference in someone’s life** - She provides several links to her articles on the “random acts of kindness” theme. Very good stuff!

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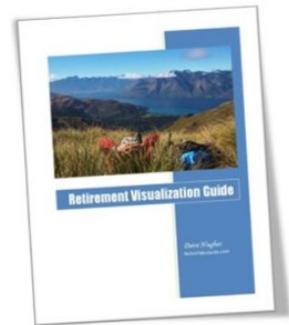
**Recent Installment from Dave Hughes' *Retire Fabulously*:  
"12 Steps to a Longer, Healthier Retirement"**

<http://retirefabulously.com/blog/2017/01/23/12-steps-longer-healthier-retirement/>

You need to download his entire article (above link), but here's a "sneak peek" of his latest blog-post to "envision, plan for, and enjoy the best retirement possible," especially about exercising regularly and eating responsibly:

1. Choose an activity you will enjoy
2. Identify what truly motivates you
3. Talk to your doctor
4. Schedule your activity
5. Find other people to exercise with
6. Get equipped
7. Adjust your attitude
8. Start small
9. Look for opportunities to add more activity into your everyday life
10. Make a plan and set some goals
11. Don't make excuses
12. Stick to it

Dave Hughes offers voluminous free retiree resources on his website: <http://retirefabulously.com/free-stuff/>



**Quotes from the National Creativity Network (NCN)**

<http://nationalcreativitynetwork.org/>

If you have not perused this website, you will be amazed at the depth of available research and applications to imagination, creativity, and innovation! For my next <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/category/creativity-and-education/> blog-post, I will make an attempt of "scratching the surface" of NCN! Be sure to check out the section on "articles of interest" ([http://nationalcreativitynetwork.org/?page\\_id=18](http://nationalcreativitynetwork.org/?page_id=18)), which also lists quotes of the week, videos of the week, and featured events/opportunities.

- "Science does not know its debt to imagination." —Ralph Waldo Emerson
- "Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses." —George Washington Carver
- "You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing, and by falling over." —Richard Branson
- "The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt." —Sylvia Plath
- ""Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
- "You're never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." —C.S. Lewis

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## Piano lessons: "Music to My Ears"

Numerous sources have dubbed this "fiction..." but, if so, what a beautiful story! (Get your Kleenex ready!) See <http://www.snopes.com/glurge/music.asp>

At the prodding of my friends, I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Hondorf. I am a former elementary school music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa.



I have always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons... something I have done for over 30 years. During those years, I found that children have many levels of musical ability, and even though I have never had a prodigy, I have taught some very talented students. However, I have also had my share of what I call "musically-challenged pupils."

One such pupil being Robby. Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson.

I prefer that students (especially boys) begin at an earlier age, which I explained to Robby. But Robby said that it had always been his mother's dream to hear him play the piano, so I took him as a student.

At the end of each weekly lesson he would always say, "My Mom's going to hear me play someday." But to me, it seemed hopeless. He just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled, but never dropped in.

Then one day, Robby stopped coming for his lessons. I thought about calling him, but assumed that because of his lack of ability, he had decided to pursue something else. I was also glad that he had stopped coming. He was a bad advertisement for my teaching!

Several weeks later, I mailed a flyer recital to the students' homes. To my surprise, Robby (who had received a flyer) asked if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and that because he had dropped out, he really did not qualify.

He told me that his mother had been sick and unable to take him to his piano lessons, but that he had been practicing. "Please Miss Hondorf, I've just got to play," he insisted. I don't know what led me to allow him to play in the recital - perhaps it was his insistence or maybe something inside of me saying that it would be all right.

The night of the recital came and the high school gymnasium was packed with parents, relatives and friends. I put Robby last in the program, just before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece. I thought that any damage he might do would come at the end of the program and I could always salvage his poor performance through my "curtain closer."





Well, the recital went off without a hitch, the students had been practicing and it showed. Then Robby came up on the stage, his clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked as though he had run an egg beater through it. "Why wasn't he dressed up like the other students?" I thought. "Why didn't his mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night?"

Robby pulled out the piano bench, and I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen to play Mozart's Concerto No. 21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories. He went from pianissimo to fortissimo, from allegro to vivace; his suspended chords that Mozart demands were magnificent! Never had I heard Mozart played so well by anyone his age.

After six and a half minutes, he ended in a grand crescendo, and everyone was on their feet in wild applause! Overcome and in tears, I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy.

"I have never heard you play like that Robby! How did you do it?" Through the microphone, Robby explained: "Well, Miss Honor. Remember I told you that my mom was sick? Well, she actually had cancer and passed away this morning. And well... she was born deaf, so tonight was the first time she had ever heard me play, and I wanted to make it special."

There wasn't a dry eye in the house that evening. As people from social services led Robby from the stage to be placed in foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy. I thought to myself then how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil.

No, I have never had a prodigy, but that night I became a prodigy... of Robby. He was the teacher and I was the pupil, for he had taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in yourself, and maybe even taking a chance on someone and you didn't know why.

Robby was killed years later in the senseless bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April, 1995.

### **Advice for seniors and caregivers – for you or your parents**

Sample blog-sites suggested by Susan Williams, <http://seniorcarehelper.org/>

- [Making the Move to Assisted Living](#)
- [Senior Health Resources](#)
- [Moving Tips for Seniors](#)
- [Boomer's Roadmap to Aging in Place](#)
- [Guide to Senior Nutrition](#)
- [Financial Resources for Seniors](#)
- [Guide to Medicare and Medicaid for Seniors](#)
- [Veterans Benefits for Seniors](#)
- [Legal Planning for Alzheimer's and Dementia](#)





**Update – PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention**

Although probably should have been abbreviated TTRRR (the last "R" for Retired Members), the leadership council for which "we" are represented and whose chair (yours truly) sits on the State Executive Board is called the Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention. Just approved by membership, the following language comes from the PMEA Bylaws Amendment (Article VII, New Section 1F):



"The teacher training, recruitment and retention council shall discuss strategies which support **the life cycle of a music educator**. The council chair shall be elected by and from the council for a two-year term. The remainder of the council shall be composed of the SMTE/Higher Education coordinator, the PCMEA president, the PCMEA state advisor, and other such members as may be determined by the president with the approval of the board of directors."

Our "marching orders" are to define the council's *new* purpose, mission, vision, and goals. The inaugural get-together is scheduled for Thursday, April 20 (optional breakfast at 7:00 a.m. and meeting to begin promptly at 7:30 p.m.) during the PMEA annual spring conference. Anyone interested may attend, but if you cannot come to Erie, suggestions to this fundamental question are welcome... *How can the Council for TTRR better serve the needs of PMEA and its membership?* Early responses from the council members include the following (notice numbers 1, 4 and 5 involve retirees!)

1. Support of SLO evaluators, providing a pool of mentors or advisors to assist in the process of teacher evaluation
2. Connection and collaboration of higher education teachers with their graduates and music educators in the field
3. Recruitment of quality and engaged candidates to college music education programs
4. Involvement of retired music educators in support of music education programs throughout the state, secondary and collegiate
5. Networking of PCMEA, veteran music educators, and retired members to communicate shared needs and values, such as a possible job openings, mentoring, and strategies for teacher recruitment and retention in the school systems

Reminder: **PMEA District 1 retiree breakfast** February 6 (9 a.m.) at the Bridgeville Kings

**Happy trails, retirees.** I hope you enjoy these retired members' communications and would consider submitting a paragraph or two.

Please feel free to share your thoughts, news, views and stories! However, always be sure that this eNEWS is not "lost" in your "promotions" or spam folders. PKF

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