



PMEA Retired Members 2017 Goals

New Year's Report: January 19, 2017

by Paul K. Fox, PMEA Retired Members Coordinator

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As NAFME Executive Director Mike Blakeslee implied in his annual NAFME first-of-the-year message, New Year's resolutions are often created by wives (and treated as husband "to-do lists"), and otherwise not taken very seriously. Regardless, this is an excellent time for individuals, departments, and organizations to **assess needs, revisit or revise the mission/vision statements, problem solve, and brainstorm new focuses, goals, and approaches.**



We have reached out to Blakeslee and NAFME for assistance in making more headway on our primary mission for PMEA retired members:

Exploration of new and unique ways to inform, motivate, engage, and activate PMEA retired members, to enhance their feelings of value, purpose, and being "needed and useful" in support of PMEA, to inspire their greater involvement in music, education, and their profession associations.

So far, initial responses have been received from NAFME President Denese Odegaard and NAFME Director of Membership, Constituency Engagement and Organizational Development Thomas Stefaniak... for which we are thankful. It was surprising that only a handful of states have established retired member chairs, and since 1989, NAFME itself has had no retired member leaders/advisors on the national board. It begs the question, at least on the national level: **are retired music educators important to NAFME and state MEAs?** Of course, this is also a relevant question to our current PMEA Strategic Planning process and the *next* four years of PMEA.

Admittedly, keeping our retirees as active members will not be easy... far from it! Many will fall off the rolls unless there are specific benefits, programs, and services for post-employed music teachers. The most common question on the mind of a music teacher retiree may be **"What's in it for me..."** – the focus of the blog-post <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2016/12/15/pmea-in-retirement-whats-in-it-for-me/>.

Shared in the e-memo to NAFME, the following **core concepts** were illustrated regarding the needs of retired members and significant benefits derived by the association for building retiree participation. *(Text in blue italics below was added for this report!)*

According to Ernie Zelinski, author of *How to Retire Happy, Wild and Free*, the **three basic needs** that work fulfills and which are important to retirement are 1) Purpose, 2) Community, and Structure.

In return, retired music educators **need** the following from NAFME and their state MEAs:

1. Recognition and archival of their past and current professional accomplishments, assignments, and awards. *(PMEA does this with the "Retiree Resource Registry" and the "Heard Through the Vintage Grapevine" column in the state journal)*
2. Significant discounts for attending festivals, workshops, and conferences. *(PMEA charges only \$10 for early-bird spring conference registration.)*

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Paul K. Fox
1564 Hastings Mill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15241
(412) 596-7937 or (412) 854-3459
paulkfox.usc@gmail.com <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/>





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3. Sessions for retirees, perhaps such topics as “retirement planning,” “finding purpose in post-employment years,” and “nurturing creative self-expression in community ensemble participation,” to name a few ideas. *(First retiree sessions were offered in 2016 PMEA Summer Conference and 2017 NAFME Eastern Division, but it seems that PMEA is moving away from “music for lifelong learning” community ensemble events as was offered during past PMEA summer conferences.)*
4. Volunteer opportunities and direct communication of the organization’s belief that retired members are essential to the realization of the mission of NAFME and values of **community** (“collaborating with our associations, members, and partners...”), **stewardship** (“empowering volunteerism and strategically developing leadership, fostering a spirit of accountability, and a culture of the giving our time, talents, and resources”), and **inclusion and equity** (“building strength and promoting diversity...”). In other words, **retirees have to know they are needed**, and should be encouraged to contribute in many ways to the planning and success of the association. *(PMEA retirees assist in manning the PMEA Info Booth and other jobs at the spring conference. However, for some reason, retired members are ineligible to serve in the PMEA mentorship program, but teachers with fewer than four years of experience are allowed to mentor?)*

Retired music educators **can offer** the following if they remain involved in their MEAs:

- Mentoring of new/less experienced teachers
- Advising “best practices” in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Serving as leaders or consultants on local or state councils/boards
- Volunteering at local workshops and state conferences
- Advocating music education to their state legislature and general public
- Presenting sessions at workshops or conferences
- Conducting or coaching students at festivals
- Assisting in technology, teacher training, MEA recruitment, auditions, etc.

What should be a priority for 2017? **We need to reach out to all soon-to- retire PMEA active members, professionals in their 30th or more year of employment.** Constantly changing IT systems and revolving door technology staffing of NAFME are to blame for inaccurate membership records (for example, more than 50% of the retired members informally surveyed never received their 25-year certificate of recognition and, as of right now, *no one* can tell us how many years any individual has been a member of their professional association since their college years). However, PMEA itself needs to take “the bull by the horns” and contact members **before they retire** to point out the benefits of continuing their involvement/participation in PMEA. To accomplish this, we need to send out a survey to the entire PMEA membership to ask the following:

1. When did you first join your college chapter of NAFME?
2. How many years were you in your PCMEA/NAfME college chapter?
3. What was the first year you joined PMEA?
4. How many years have you been a member of PMEA?
5. What was the date of your first job as a public/private school music teacher?
6. What is your personal e-mail (not related to your teaching institution)?
7. If you have an idea or are willing to share, what year do you plan to retire?
8. Optional: What schools, job assignments, and years have you been employed?

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Instead of making sense out of and keypunching data from “those old membership cards” on a shelf in PMEA headquarters in Hamburg, **I propose that Josh and I create, distribute, and gather information from an online membership survey.** After assembling the data from this project, we could then “follow-up” with the following:

1. The PMEA retired member coordinator could automatically “reach out” to PMEA members who have reached their 30th year of teaching using their personal as well as work e-mails.
2. PMEA staff could send the updated “number of years” data to NAFME so that 25-year certificates would be distributed on a timely and more accurate basis.

For 2017, this would be the PMEA Retired Member Coordinator’s one NEW GOAL for PMEA retired members, in addition to continuing and refining our 2014-16 initiatives:

- Expansion, promotion, and ongoing revision of the Retiree Resource Registry, archiving retire members’ career assignments and accomplishment while providing officers and membership a source of informal mentors, consultants, and advisers.
- Publication of active retired members’ “stories” – news, awards and honors, appointments, and other successes
- Collaboration of music teacher retirement articles in PMEA News, Edutopia.org. and other online blog-sites or print media
- E-mail distribution of bi-monthly Retired Member Network eNEWS
- Organization of volunteers to support PMEA annual spring conference including staffing the Info Booth, and serving as Presiding Chairs, Registration Aides, Planning/Listening Committee Members, Guest Lecturers, Panel Discussion Members, Advocacy Representatives, Chaperones, and/or other organizational needs.
- Updated postings of PA community/amateur band, chorus, orchestra, and theater directories to nurture/enrich more opportunities for “music as life-long learning.”
- Communication of additional tools for a smooth transition to a happy retirement, fostering the use of the PMEA retired members’ website <http://www.pmea.net/retired-members/>, *Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide/Bibliography*, and the “For-Retirees” blog-site <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/for-retirees/>.



PKF

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