



# LEA *Express*

November 21, 2008

*A weekly compilation of Association news, minutes, upcoming events and tips for LEA Members.*

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# *American* **Education Week**

**Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility**

**November 16-22, 2008**

NEA's American Education Week presents all Americans with an opportunity to honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education. The weeklong celebration spotlights the different people who are critical in building great public schools for the nation's 50 million K-12 students.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our future ... the children.

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## **LEA Board and Work Session Minutes – 11-03-08**

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The LEA Board Minutes are available to read at the following link:

<http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org/MinutesLEABoard.html>

The LEA Board of Directors is made up of twelve LEA members elected by their peers. The Executive Committee of the Board consists of the President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. In addition to the Executive Committee, there are three elementary representatives, one middle level representative, two high school representatives and three at-large representatives. The Board meets at the LEA Office twice a month during the school year and once per month during the summer. Members are always encouraged to come and observe.

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## **Thank you for helping share your love of reading with a child by donating to the 12th Annual Harvest of Books drive.**

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### **THE HARVEST WAS A SUCCESS!**

Since its inception in 1997, the Harvest of Books, Inc. has distributed over 100,000 books to first and second graders in the public, private and parochial schools of Lincoln. This year, every first grader will receive 2 books and every second grader will receive 1 book! The 1st and 2nd graders will receive their books the week of Thanksgiving.

Throughout the year, in lieu of gifts, consider giving a financial contribution to the Harvest of Books by sending a check to: Harvest of Books, c/o LEA, 4920 Normal Blvd., Lincoln NE 68506 or make an on-line donation by clicking on the "donate now" button on the LEA Website.

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## **DON'T FORGET TO UTILIZE YOUR LEA/NSEA/NEA DISCOUNTS WHEN YOU ARE SHOPPING FOR THE HOLIDAYS!**

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The holiday season is upon us ... so don't forget to utilize your LEA Discount Card, NSEA Access Card (being delivered via U.S. Mail by mid-December) and your NEA Member Benefits to boost your savings to the maximum!

Don't hesitate to let us know if you have misplaced your LEA Discount Card ... we will send you another one right away.

Remember – You will need your Membership ID Number to access these benefits. Your ID number is on the backside of the NSEA Voice and NEA Today mailing labels. Or e-mail the LEA Office, [teresa.greve@nsea.org](mailto:teresa.greve@nsea.org) to have your ID number e-mailed to you.

The following links will direct you to great savings!

NEA Click and Save ... <https://www.neamb.com/clickandsave/>

NEA Member Benefits ... <https://www.neamb.com/discount/index.jsp>

NSEA Access Card ... <http://www.memberweb.com/memberweb/NewLogin.asp>

LEA Discount Card ... <http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org/LEADiscounts.html>

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## **LEA Discount Updates**

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### **Carpets Direct**

**Contact: Chris Talbot**

**5221 S 48<sup>th</sup> Street, #3**

**Lincoln NE 68516**

**(402) 486-3700**

**[www.carpetsdirectne.com](http://www.carpetsdirectne.com)**

**15% off special order material**

**10% any product in stock**

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### **Barnes and Noble Special Educator Shopping Event**

**Saturday – December 6**

**SouthPointe (2910 Pine Lake Road)**

**Save 25% off Books and Gifts and 10% off DVDs and CDs**

**Join us for specials, door prizes, and personal shopping assistance making your holiday purchases.**

**Click here for additional details and certain restrictions.**

**<http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org/LEADiscounts.html>**

## PLUS ... Enjoy Extra Discounts at Barnes & Noble.com

NSEA members can save double at Barnes & Noble.Com!

From Dec. 1-19, NSEA and NEA members will receive an additional 10 percent off each purchase every time you shop through the Barnes & Noble.com custom online bookstore – that's double your standard NEA MB discount.

*Plus*, now's a great time to shop the Holiday Gift Guide, featuring thousands of titles at up to 40 percent off list price! It's our biggest sale of the year, and it's going on right now!

Members will also enjoy fast and free delivery in three business days or less on qualifying orders of \$25 or more. For details, go to: [www.neamb.com/bn](http://www.neamb.com/bn)

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### COSTCO

#### CONTACTS:

**THOMAS J. MEAD – 402-321-9933**

**DARLA SCHAFF – 402-306-3357**

We would like to invite LEA Members to visit our Warehouse, located at 12300 West Dodge Road in Omaha. Come check out our huge facility and see for yourself why Nebraskans are finding Costco a better choice.

Click here for more details: <http://www.lincolneducationassociation.org/LEADiscounts.html>

\$10 Discount on Gold Star Memberships in the form of a \$10 cash card or taken off initial membership at the time of sign up. \$20 cash card for Executive members or off the membership at the time of sign up.

For more information on the memberships, click on the following link.

<http://www.costco.com/Service/FeaturePage.aspx?ProductNo=11315018>

***Note: To receive the above discount, LEA members need to contact Darla Schaff or Thomas J. Mead directly.***

Until a store opens up in Lincoln, you can order some items on-line or shop at the stores in Omaha and Nationwide.

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## Free Items Available

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Come to the LEA Office for the following items ...

4920 Normal Blvd

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Monday, November 24 and/or Tuesday, November 25

**Extra Boxes** ... Are you moving? Organizing? Sending Packages? We've been storing all the boxes we could get our hands on for the past few months for the Harvest of Books – and now that the books have been boxed up and are being delivered to the buildings, we have some left over.

**Bookmarks** ... We have some promotional bookmarks left over from the Harvest of Books. If you could utilize these for your personal use, classroom, library, etc ... we would love to get them to you!

**Used/Higher Level Books:** Each year during the Harvest we have people who donate books that are too high of a level for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and also some used books. We want to get these books to you so you can utilize them in your classrooms, or for your personal use. Please stop by the LEA Office during the above time/dates to select some books. Books left over will be donated to the LARSP Annual Used Book Sale.

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## NEA Members Earn Discount on Math Fee

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NEA has been working with partners at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) to make available to NEA members the Council's equity resources.

Generally these resources (tips for teachers, research, etc.) are available to NCTM members only; but through Dec. 31, NEA members will have access as well. NEA members will also be offered \$10 off the regular membership fee if they choose to join NCTM. NEA members do not have to join in order to access the equity resources, but they must use the URL listed below, or they'll be asked for their NCTM membership number.

NEA members may access the NCTM resources at this Web address: <http://www.nctm.org/nea>

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## Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center (313 N. 13th Street)

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### ***HAPPY-GO-LUCKY Special Discounted Admission***

Opening at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center on Friday, November 28, ***HAPPY-GO-LUCKY*** chronicles the daily comings and goings of 30-year-old Poppy, a primary school teacher, whose positive, easy-going outlook epitomizes the title.

"Sally Hawkins, in a blinding, Oscar-worthy piece of acting so good you barely see it, plays Poppy, a perpetually upbeat elementary schoolteacher in London," writes Tom Long, film critic for the *Detroit News*.

**In honor of all the hard working school teachers here in Lincoln, The Ross is offering a special discounted admission price to all screenings of *HAPPY-GO-LUCKY* to all elementary, middle, and high school teachers of \$6.00 for evening screenings and \$5.00 for matinees. Just present your staff ID at the Ross Box Office when buying your ticket to receive the discount.**

**So, Lincoln teachers, come join Poppy for a bit of fun at a special price and keep up the good work!**

P.S. These are the same discounted admission prices afforded to members of the Friends of the Ross so please consider joining the Friends when you come to see **HAPPY-GO-LUCKY**.

In **HAPPY-GO-LUCKY**, we follow Poppy through her daily routines-going clubbing with her friends, preparing exercises for her class, going to the chiropractor, and taking flamenco lessons. Nothing truly remarkable happens to Poppy, and yet, her boundless good cheer and childlike delight make her smallest endeavors incredibly engaging.

"Sally Hawkins has been in movies before, including Leigh's *Vera Drake* and Woody Allen's *Cassandra's Dream*, but this is her star-making role," opines Roger Ebert, writing in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He continues, "She was named best actress at Berlin 2008. I will deliberately employ a cliché: She is a joy to behold."

**HAPPY-GO-LUCKY** is showing at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center (313 N. 13th Street) on Friday, November 28 through Sunday, December 21. Show times are available at [www.TheRoss.org](http://www.TheRoss.org), by consulting your newspaper, or by calling the MRRMAC film information line at 402.472.5353. **HAPPY-GO-LUCKY** is rated R for language by the Motion Picture Association of America.

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## **Find NEA's Grant Applications Online**

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A teacher from Omaha is one of the latest winners of a grant from The NEA Foundation. Dawn Ferreyra, a teacher at Morton Magnet Middle School, won a \$2,000 Learning and Leadership Grant to develop teaching strategies and curriculum that will promote retention of gifted students from underserved populations and enhance the learning of diverse gifted students.

Now, with that announcement, The NEA Foundation has announced that educators can apply for grants on its Web site.

"In an increasingly technologically savvy world, we want to encourage educators to use all of the resources they have at their fingertips, many of which can be found on the Internet," said Harriet Sanford, CEO and president of the NEA Foundation. "In addition to reducing paper, taking our application process online will make it more convenient, require less lead time, and reduce the number of errors applicants can make."

The Foundation will phase in this process, accepting both paper and electronic applications, through Feb. 1, 2009, when the process will become paper-free.

Descriptions of current and past recipients, as well as details about the program and how to apply, are on the NEA Foundation's Web site at: [www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org)

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## **LARSP Annual Used Book Sale – January 15-18, 2009**

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Lincoln Area Retired School Personnel Annual Used Book Sale  
Westfield-Gateway  
January 15-18, 2009

Proceeds to provide scholarships and fund other philanthropies.

For more information call 483-1649.

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## **Nominations Needed for the 2008-09 NSEA Awards**

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Now is the time to be thinking about who you will nominate for the 2008-09 Nebraska State Education Association Awards!

- Teaching Excellence Award for teachers in LPS who have taught more than 3 years.
- Rookie of the Year for teachers in their 2nd year of teaching in LPS.
- Education Support Personnel (ESP) Award for all ESP members.

You can submit your entry online at the NSEA website, or print off the nomination form and send it to NSEA before February. <http://www.nsea.org/news/all.htm?articleno=431>

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## **Former SEAN Members: Get Rebate Now!**

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Are you a first-year teacher, fresh out of college?

If so, and if you were a member of the Student Education Association of Nebraska during your college years, you may be eligible for a rebate on your SEAN dues.

NSEA offers a one-time, \$10 rebate for every year you were a member of SEAN. And this year, NEA is offering an additional \$20 rebate for each year you were a member of SEAN. If, as a student, you were a member of SEAN all four years of college, the rebate of \$30 for each year could total \$120!

For a rebate form, contact your local association president, or download the form from the NSEA Web site at:

<http://www.nsea.org/members/treasurer.htm>

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## **Retirement Health Care Eligibility**

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### **Will You Retire Early?**

### **Keep Health Insurance Options in Mind**

When education employees consider early retirement, continuous health insurance coverage is always an important consideration.

Those who would like to retire early and maintain access to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska health insurance coverage until Medicare eligibility kicks in must be aware of three conditions that must be met under the Educator's Health Alliance retiree direct bill program for retired school employees. The EHA has mandated these eligibility requirements in order to keep the program viable and reliable.

The three eligibility requirements are described below:

- The first requirement is participation in the program for the five years immediately prior to retirement. (There are special rules for employees and retirees from schools that more recently joined the EHA program.) This means that someone who was eligible for the EHA Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan prior to retirement, but chose not to participate, is not eligible for direct bill health insurance through the EHA plan.
- Second, at the time of retirement, you must select the Direct Bill early retire option and not the available COBRA coverage. Individuals electing COBRA, at early retirement and after Aug. 31, 2004, do not have the option of enrolling in this program at the end of COBRA coverage.
- The third requirement is a minimum eligibility age of 50.

Along with the eligibility requirements, you must be a Special Services member in order to continue in the plan.

For more details about direct bill eligibility, call the NSEA and ask for Special Services or membership. They may be reached from Lincoln at 475-7611, or from elsewhere in the state at 1-800-742-0047.

For more details, go to the Educators Health Alliance Web site and click on "Retirement Info." The Web site can be found at: [www.educatorshealthalliance.org](http://www.educatorshealthalliance.org)

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## **Loan Forgiveness: More Information**

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Depending upon the type of loan that you have, you may qualify for forgiveness on the basis of working in a school that is designated as low income or you may qualify for forgiveness on the basis of teaching in a content shortage area. If you have questions about loan forgiveness please contact one of the following resources. The Nebraska Department of Education's role in the loan forgiveness process is to identify the shortage areas Title I schools and we do not have specific information about federal loans and forgiveness processes.

National Student Loan Program (NSLP is based in Nebraska)  
(Including: Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program and Stafford )  
Toll free number: 800 735-8778, ext. 6410  
Website:

- <http://www.nslp.org/>

US Department of Education  
(Including: Stafford, Perkins, FFEL, TEACH\* and Direct Loans)

Toll free number: 800 433-3243

Website:

- <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/teachercancel.jsp>  
(includes information about your student loan history)

When you search for low income school districts on the federal site you may need to use the previous school year in order to get information - the data on that site is not always the current school year! Information about designated shortage areas can be found on the site provided above or at:

- <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tsa.pdf>

Nebraska shortage areas are updated on an annual basis and if the current school year information is not available on the website, you can contact Danielle Lotspeich at the e-mail address provided below. In addition, you will find more information at:

- [www.nebraskateachereducation.org](http://www.nebraskateachereducation.org)

\*If you were awarded a Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant by your college's financial aid office, remember that you are required to verify each year that you are meeting your teaching responsibilities. This process is done through the US Department of Education, not through the Nebraska Department of Education or your college. Failure to verify your status will result in your grant converting to a loan. You may find additional information on the TEACH Grant through the US Department of Education's website at:

- <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/TEACH.jsp>

In addition, you will find more information at:

- [www.nebraskateachereducation.org](http://www.nebraskateachereducation.org)

The primary role of the Nebraska Department of Education in the loan forgiveness process is to identify the shortage areas and to identify Title I schools. Due to staffing issues, the site is a bit dated, but the narrative information contained there is still valid!

If you were awarded a Nebraska Attracting to Excellence scholarship/loan, information about forgiveness/repayment can be found at:

- <http://www.nde.nstate.ne.us/LEGAL/COVER25>

These scholarships were awarded by Nebraska teacher preparation programs beginning in 2006-07. For more information about the Attracting Excellence scholarship/loan, please contact Danielle Lotspeich, 402.471.2783.

- [danielle.lotspeich@nebraska.gov](mailto:danielle.lotspeich@nebraska.gov)



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## **Dangerous Sources of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, carbon monoxide poisoning is the number one cause of death by poisoning. As many as 3,500 Americans succumb to carbon monoxide poisoning a year, either due to accidents or suicide.

If you're concerned about the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning in your home, there are devices available to measure and monitor the air quality. Called CO detectors, they sound an alarm when levels of the gas are detected. That's critical, because carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas.

What are the most common sources of carbon monoxide?

Faulty fuel-burning furnaces.

Ovens.

Water heaters.

Space heaters.

Wood stoves.

Fireplaces.

The best way to reduce risk of CO poisoning is to maintain these appliances and fireplaces.

*This article is provided courtesy of California Casualty.*