

# MEA-RETIRED TRIBUNE

MARCH 2020

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## Winter conference impresses this retiree...

*...and sparks a little reminiscing*

As the MEA-Retired representative on the MEA Member Conference Advisory Committee, I had the pleasure of facilitating five sessions at the MEA Winter Conference, held February 5-7 at the Marriott Renaissance Center in Detroit. Over 900 members, staff and others had the opportunity to participate in a variety of sessions, talk with representatives from MESSA and MEA-Financial Services, engage with members of various caucuses as well as network with other attendees.

I attended my first MEA conference in December, 1980; it was the Instruction and Professional Development Conference held at what was the gleaming, impressive, then-four-year-old Hyatt Regency in Dearborn. When the outstanding lineup of sessions ended for the day, some of us took the monorail over to the Fairlane Town Center, a lovely mall in its heyday.

I was also fortunate to attend the Bargaining/PAC/PR Conference there a few times, including a couple years when the then-Ritz-Carlton housed the overflow. When the then-Westin Renaissance Center and nearby Cobo Hall became the conference location later, I remember being in my hotel room after lunch one year when an earthquake centered near Cleveland rocked the structure. Time marches on.

Fast forward to 2020. The IPD Conference has been gone for a while, and the now-Edwards Hotel locked its doors in December, 2018 when the facility abruptly closed after the city of Dearborn deemed it “unfit for human occupancy” following an inspection. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, the once gleaming, impressive facility had been purchased and renamed by a Canadian businessperson in 2016; this individual was accused in a variety of money-laundering and fraud in the U.S., Canada and other countries.

Back to the amazing NOW. The renamed 2020 MEA Winter Conference left me excited and energized about the future. The sessions I facilitated ranged from one that demonstrated the advantages of members and district leadership communicating regularly over breakfast in “It Starts with a Meal” to an engaging and enlightening 90 minutes with four amazing, inspiring early-career educators in “MiNE,” or Michigan New Educators. MEA offered a variety of opportunities to learn about a wide range of important topics. While what we recall as the traditional winter conference fare of sessions included some with bargaining, PAC and PR as their focus, others provided attendees with the chance to, for example, get SCECH credits, work toward ESP certification and explore how to nurture excitement in STEM classes.

I commend MEA members, staff and officers, as well as the staff of the Marriott Renaissance Center, for their roles in making the conference earn gold stars. These early-February days offered an outstanding opportunity for educators to learn, to network, to enjoy each other’s company and to return to their school districts even more prepared to do what is best for students, for their communities and for each other. A special thanks to MEA staff members Carolyn Cortright and Kia Hagens and the Member Engagement Department for making this event such a pleasure to experience.

## SARAH SAYS

From Sarah Borgman, NEA-Retired President

At last, March and the hope of SPRING and for better things ahead. By now we're already tired of campaign rhetoric on both sides, BUT I trust we never tire of speaking up for our profession and the educators and students related to public education. Sometimes it might seem that what little difference one person can make is minimal, but one and then another and yet one more can add a strong voice to our education concerns. As Winston Churchill said, "Never, never, never give up!"

At a recent committee meeting I heard a staffer say, "We need to ask members to *belong*, not join." I like belonging, being a part of something big, and never forget that we are BIG. We are NEA Retired; our commitment continues and we are needed now---MORE THAN EVER!

### Are census jobs available, and how can I apply for one?

The census is currently hiring "census takers, recruiting assistants, office staff, and supervisory staff." Some positions are eligible for health-care benefits, and military veterans are eligible for hiring preference.

The most common job offered by the Census is for census takers, also known as enumerators. Enumerators are tasked with hitting the streets, walking to residences that haven't responded to the census and helping those residents fill out the form. The Census Bureau needs to hire over 400,000 of them across the country to visit every home that does not respond.

At a census forum held in Michigan in September, Marilyn Sanders, Regional Census Director in Chicago, said it would be a priority to hire locals to work as enumerators, as residents are more likely to open the door for members of their own community.

To be eligible for a job, you must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, able to pass a criminal background check, and available to work flexible hours including evenings and weekends. You must have access to reliable transportation, whether that is a car or robust public transit, and have internet access and an email to complete online job training.

Hours are variable, based on the position's needs and your schedule. The bureau says the positions typically last for several weeks. For census takers, pay is hourly, and the average rate across Michigan is \$25 per hour. Average pay for every county is available on the census website.

You can apply for a job with the U.S. Census Bureau at [2020census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs).

### E-mail scam still happening

A few MEA-Retired members and MEA employees are still receiving e-mails that are allegedly from me, Katherine Walker Telma, requesting that you contact me. **DO NOT OPEN! TRASH THEM.** They are NOT from me and indicate that they were sent from some e-mail address with which I have NO connection. I do NOT use "Katherine" in any MEA-Retired correspondence.

We have removed lists of contact information for officers and board members from the public part of our website, and anticipate that this will help alleviate this situation.