

# THE KERNEL

A publication of the Kentucky Public Retirees, Inc.

Issue 137

July 2022



## President's Perspective

by Larry Totten

## Celebrating the Membership

This issue of *The Kernel* is different – more pictures, fewer words – as we celebrate our chapters and their members in reviving our in-person, monthly meetings. Great to be back again!

Looking ahead to the rest of 2022, and into 2023, our goal will be to get legislative action for a retiree COLA. Later in the year, we'll be asking each of you to contact your individual House and Senate members and tell them why this is important to you. While there are no guarantees. I think the time may be right to get this done. We have to try.

Remember, our public pensions are not a handout – WE EARNED IT!

## Membership Update

by Betty Hawkins

The winners of Martha's Membership Contest (June 1, 2020, through May 31, 2022,) were recognized at the June 16, 2022 Quarterly State Board Meeting which was held in Frankfort. A total of 268 new members were recruited. We are pleased with the results since many of our chapters couldn't hold monthly meetings or participate in local events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds for all prizes were provided through individual donations.

Bluegrass West Chapter won the \$70 prize for recruiting the largest number of new members - 51; Green River Chapter won the \$70 prize for the largest percentage increase in chapter members - 24 percent.

The following individuals were awarded prizes for recruiting the largest number of new members: \$125 First Place - Mary Lou Burchfield, Bluegrass West – ten new members; \$100 Second Place – Melissa Artopoeus, Northern Kentucky – eight new members; \$75 Third Place – Jennifer Strange, Barren River – five new members; \$50 Fourth Place – Jean Henning and Marilyn Milburn, Bluegrass West, split the prize since they each recruited three.

Three random drawings were also held with the following individuals winning \$20 each: Vicki Stringer (Bluegrass West Chapter); Melissa Artopoeus (Northern Kentucky Chapter); and Linda Diann Cecil (Green River Chapter).

Congratulations to all of those who recruited new members. We appreciate your participation. You are encouraged to immediately start recruiting for the next contest period (June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023,). Winners will be recognized at the June 16, 2023 Annual Business Meeting which will be held in Bowling Green.

KPR statewide membership has decreased 4.62 percent since the same time period last year. We can't successfully lobby for a COLA with low membership numbers. Spousal membership is also an option. Do your part; sign up a new member today. Feel free to email me at: [betty.hawkins49@gmail.com](mailto:betty.hawkins49@gmail.com) or call 502-321-0649 if you need assistance or have questions.

**Martha's Membership Contest  
June 1, 2020, through May 31, 2022**



**Jean Henning accepts the award for Bluegrass West which had the most members recruited**



**Jean Lewis accepts the award for Green River which had the largest percentage increase**



**Contest Winners Above**

**State President Larry Totten awards checks to the contest winners:**

- Mary Lou Burchfield (BW), first place winner**
- Jennifer Strange (BR), third place winner**
- Jean Hennings (BW), fourth place winner (tie)**
- Marilyn Milburn (BW), fourth place winner (tie)**



**Mary Lou Burchfield won first place. She recruited 10.**



**Melissa Artopoeus won second place. She recruited 8.**

# Chapter News

**Barren River** - Our March guest speaker was Karen Foley, neighborhood services coordinator for Bowling Green. Ms. Foley said that her job is to serve as a liaison between city governmental departments and neighborhood groups. The goal is to improve the quality of life in Bowling Green for everyone. Even though her position falls outside of county government, she tries to connect any Warren County citizen with needed services. She centered much of her presentation on how Bowling Green has responded to both the pandemic and the December 2021 tornado and the Age-Friendly Bowling Green Initiative which seeks to make the area more inclusive of older adults. The initiative focuses on aging and health issues for those over 50.



**BR President Carol Douglas and Rep. Shawn McPherson**

At our April meeting, the guest speaker was State Representative Shawn McPherson, who represents District 22. Rep. McPherson gave a very informative presentation about the recently completed legislative session. He discussed the legislation which allocated raises for current state and KSP employees. Approximately 1000 bills were filed during the session, and 240 were passed. With a historic surplus of funds, the legislators were able to pass a very generous budget that also left approximately one billion unspent dollars. He referred to these dollars as an “opportunity fund” for the state. He was questioned about any legislative action taken for state retirees. He stated that he would be in support of either a COLA or one-time payment to all retirees, possibly next year.

Chapter President Carol Douglas said that our chapter will have unpaid members deleted from our rolls on May 31. She reminded the group that the annual meeting is still scheduled for June 14-16, 2023, in Bowling Green.

The chapter voted at the May meeting to make a charitable donation to the Hospice of Southern Kentucky and the American Cancer Society. The donations were made in memory of seven members lost since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and in honor of Romanza Johnson, our membership committee chairperson. Ms. Johnson was recently recognized by the Hospice for her contributions to the community.

**Bluegrass West** - Although our attendance has been down since we restarted our meetings in December, we are beginning to get back to normal with each meeting. The March meeting had a total of 40 members present. Our speaker in March was Carolyn Dupont, with Braver Angels, which is a grassroots organization that aims to “depolarize” America. Ms. Dupont, a professor at Eastern Kentucky University, explained that polarization is not just having different or opposing political positions on issues. It is the lack of overlap between the two parties.



**Carolyn Dupont with Braver Angels**

Three candidates who are running for offices in this year’s election attended our April meeting. They are: Jay(Gex) Williams, running for state senator; Grayson Vandergriff, currently the mayor of Midway and running for state representative of the 56th District; and Phillip Shepherd, running for reelection as Franklin Circuit Court judge.



**Bluegrass West (Cont'd)** - Representative Derrick Graham was our speaker in April. He advised that this past legislative session was like none that he had ever seen. For the first time he can remember, this was the first budget passed where there weren't any cuts. Revenue was up because more funds were paid in. We were able to have this additional money because of our good relationship with the federal government and more funds being made available. With this extra money, we were able to put more money into the retirement system. He apologized that no COLA was provided for retirees. Had it passed, House Bill 446 would have funded \$162 million for it. However, the bill was not brought out of committee. State employees will receive an eight percent raise for the first year and 12 percent for the second year. State police and social workers also received increases. The legislators also voted to give themselves an eight percent increase in pay. He spoke concerning his disappointment with the present legislative redistricting which places Franklin County in an extremely peculiar redistricting situation. The legislative redistricting is being challenged and the Kentucky Supreme Court may end up deciding the final fate of this legislation. He also expressed his displeasure with the fact that many things were done during this session hurting those Kentuckians who needed help the most. As a former educator, he was concerned that our public educational system was not properly funded.



Philip Case speaks to BW members

In May, our speaker was Phillip Case, contributing writer for *The State Journal*, who spoke on gardening and planting by the signs, which is a simple system of gardening that utilizes the phases of the moon and signs of the zodiac to make your good garden better. A "garden" can be a traditional plot in the ground, raised beds, containers, or anything that contains soil, compost, potting medium, or any combination. There are two major aspects: the phases of the moon, and the astrological signs of the zodiac. Phillip explained that there are moon phases and zodiac signs. He distributed a helpful document explaining the benefits of gardening.

KPPA Liaison Chair Larry Totten reported that investment returns through March wiped out gains earned in the previous six months. For these nine months, investment returns range from just under one percent to about two and a half percent. April was also a volatile month, generally not good for returns. The new health insurance contract for 2023 should be announced by the end of June.

Materials must be ready for open enrollment in October. The interim period for new bills to be filed begins in June. COLAs may be a possibility in the 2023 Session.

Marilyn Milburn, the nominating committee chair, reported all the current officers had agreed to remain in their positions for the coming year. The officers will be elected at the June 21 Meeting and sworn in prior to the meeting July 19.

**Covered Bridge** - The Covered Bridge Chapter has certainly had its ups and downs with COVID-19 and the passing of several members from various causes. Our attendance has been down but seems to be slowly coming back.

In April our speaker was April Wilhoit from the Fleming County Extension Office who gave an interesting talk on lawn and garden tips. Our May meeting proved to be the largest this year with 31 in attendance. At our May meeting, we welcomed new members from Menifee County and Rowan County. Our speaker for May was Clay Skaggs, a Fleming countian, who now works in the Kentucky Attorney General's Office. Mr.



Gloria Davis, Clay Skaggs, Connie Williams, and Sandra Cooper.

Skaggs talked about the outcome of the last legislative session. He took questions and comments from the floor.

Covered Bridge members seem to be concerned with inflation and wondered when and if we will get another COLA. The group agreed to meet again in August, giving everyone a vacation for the months of June and July.

**Cumberland Valley -**

In March, the guest speaker was Humana Insurance representative Jessica Stolberg. Ms. Stolberg discussed Medicare and the Humana Go365 Program.



Jessica Stolberg

**Cumberland Valley (Cont'd)** - The meeting held on April 26, had guest speaker 89th District Kentucky State Representative Tim Truett representing Jackson, Lee, and Wolfe Counties. He also represents parts of Madison and Laurel counties. Pensions, COLAs, and other current issues were the topics of discussion at this meeting.



CV members at the May meeting



Representative Josh Bray

The May 20 guest speaker was 71st District State Representative Josh Bray who represents Rockcastle County, along with parts of Laurel, Madison, and Pulaski. Pensions, COLAs, and other current issues were also discussed during the meeting.

**Green River** - Nathan Godeke, prearrangement specialist for Glenn Funeral Home and Crematory, spoke to the chapter in March. He is a retired Owensboro police officer with 20 years of service. He was a detective for seven years. Mr. Godeke encouraged all to take the time to arrange what you would want for your service as it takes the burden from family. Pre-funding is important as it freezes the cost. You can decide on a trust or life insurance policy. Also, organ donation was discussed to help others in need.

He gave the chapter much information, and if you would like to talk with him, feel free to call him at 270-683-1505. He made the presentation enjoyable, and there was a lot of discussion. Lewis Jean gave a comprehensive legislative report. Lewis is an asset to the chapter.

Nicole L Hawkins, certified senior advisor, was the guest speaker for the April meeting. She is also a VA accredited agent. Ms. Hawkins had a tremendous amount of information about benefits. She provided sound guidance about government benefit programs and financial decisions that can help families. The topics she covered included: dealing with assisted living and nursing home facilities, claiming veteran's benefits, understanding Medicaid, helping to handle the details of dealing with government benefit programs, and financial planning.

State Representative Scott Lewis was our guest speaker in May. He said that the state budget that was passed during the last session addressed some important issues. It gave raises to state employees and gave state troopers \$15,000 more per year in salary. It fully funded the Kentucky Retirement System and contributed \$600 million more to KRS. He hopes that there will be a bill filed in the next budget session that will address a cost-of-living adjustment for retirees. He said that he would file this himself if necessary. He also mentioned the plan to gradually decrease the state income tax. The sales tax would then increase. Rep. Lewis will cover Ohio County, Hancock County, and part of Daviess County beginning January 2023. The current census created the need for redistricting.

**Green River Members**



Barbara Logston



Brenda McFadden-Stone



Frances Lockridge



Denny Welsh



**Lincoln Trail** - The Lincoln Trail Chapter is active once again! We sincerely appreciate the untiring efforts and dedication of KPR President Larry Totten, KPR Treasurer Robinil Jameson, and KPR Membership Chair Betty Hawkins, without whom this would not have been possible.



**The newly-elected LT Board: President Theresa Wickersham, Membership Chair Linda Marcum, Secretary/Treasurer Sandy Allen, and Vice-president Linda Funk.**

President Totten kept in touch with our members, reserved the meeting spaces for all of 2022, provided speakers, traveled to Elizabethtown to preside over our meetings for the past five months, and continually encouraged and supported us. KPR Treasurer Robinil Jameson and Membership Chair Betty Hawkins attended and participated in the meetings and provided much-needed support and encouragement for those who stepped forward to lead the chapter. The chapter meets the second Monday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at Shoney's Restaurant in Elizabethtown. Come join us for a fun and informative meeting as we get to know each other!

**Northern Kentucky** - In March, the guest speaker was John Middleton, Kenton County circuit court clerk. He spoke about the Real ID program. He also spoke about the Trust for Life organ donor program. He gave insight into the duties of the circuit court. He stated the biggest problem they are having is recruiting staff. They have multiple openings available. They are working on increasing salaries to help increase the incentive for new employees.

The guest speaker in April was Dan Allen from the Kenton County Extension Office. He spoke about the increase in the number of farms in Kenton County. Melissa Artopoeus reported that she sent chapter meeting notices to six local publications: Bellevue Community News, NKY Thrives, NKY News Facebook, KPR Facebook, Cincinnati Enquirer, and NKY Tribune Calendar. She also sends new retirees a welcome letter and a member application. Six were mailed recently.

The guest speaker in May was Cindy Sery. She spoke about the history of Spring Grove Cemetery. She highlighted some historical figures that are buried there. Ralph Wolff reported there are currently 219 chapter members, and 19 who have not yet paid their dues. Those who haven't paid dues by the end of May were dropped from the chapter. He reported that member George Hoffman's health is improving.

The chapter had our election of officers for a one-year term. Those elected were: President Asom Ponananta, Vice President Jim Hill, Treasurer Jim Dahmann, and Secretary Dorise Barth. The new officers will be sworn in at the June meeting and take office in July.



**President Asom Ponananta, Vice President Jim Hill, Secretary Dorise Barth, and Treasurer Jim Dahmann**

**Purchase** - The Purchase Chapter met on April 14 at the Paducah Pizza Inn. Our speaker was Jessica Stolberg from Humana Insurance. State Representative Chris Freeland from the Sixth District spoke to the chapter at the May meeting. In June, Pam Ward from Baptist Health spoke to us about a good diet plan. For our July meeting, we are reaching out to a lady that is a refugee from Ukraine.



**Representative Chris Freeland**



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KENTUCKY PUBLIC RETIREES



June 2023 will be here before we know it. Mark June 14 - 16, 2023, on your calendar and plan to attend the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of KPR in Bowling Green. If you have ideas on topics that you would like to see presented, please forward these to Carol Douglas, president of the Barren River Chapter, at [douglas\\_353@msn.com](mailto:douglas_353@msn.com).

**Kentucky Public Retirees Membership Application**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complete and mail application to: KPR Manager, P.O. Box 4082, Frankfort, KY 40604

I am:

- A new member. Membership is free the first calendar year (until Dec. 31 of year joined.)
- A new member and want to pay for my second year. Enclosed is \$15.00.
- A current member and want to renew. Enclosed is \$15.00 for one year or \$30.00 for two years.

Applicants must be a member of one of these systems or the spouse of a KPR member.

Check all that apply:  KERS  CERS  SPRS  Spouse of KPR member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter (if known) \_\_\_\_\_



**Kentucky Public Retirees**  
 P. O. Box 4082  
 Frankfort, KY 40604  
 kprmanager@gmail.com



<p><b>Barren River</b>          10 a.m. (CT), 3rd Monday          BRADD Center          177 Graham Avenue          (off Plum Springs Rd)          Bowling Green, KY          Contact Carol Douglas          (270-535-4023)</p>	<p><b>Big Sandy</b>          11:30 a.m., 2nd Thursday          New meeting location pending          Contact Thomas Hereford III          (606) 226-1753</p>	<p><b>Bluegrass East</b>          12:00 a.m. (ET), 2nd Wednesday          Pasta Garage          Delaware Ave.          Lexington, KY          Contact Larry Totten          (502) 226-0273</p>	<p><b>Bluegrass West</b>          11:30 a.m. (ET), 3rd Tuesday          VFW Franklin County Post 4075          104 E. Second St.          Frankfort, KY          Contact Jean Henning          (502) 682-6996</p>
<p><b>Covered Bridge</b>          11:00 a.m. (ET), 2nd Thursday          Double 'S' Bowling          150 Foster St.          Flemingsburg, KY          Contact June Pugh          (606) 849-2651</p>	<p><b>Cumberland Valley</b>          11:30 a.m. (ET), 2nd Tuesday          Meeting locations vary          Contact David Cornett          (606) 260-0490</p>	<p><b>Fivco</b>          11:30 a.m. (ET), 3rd Monday          Belle Fonte'          1320 Carter Avenue          Ashland, KY          Contact Morris Wells          (606) 465-5784</p>	<p><b>Green River</b>          12:00 p.m. (CT), 2nd Wednesday          Briarpatch Restaurant          2760 Veach Road          Owensboro, KY          Contact Agnes Barron          ((270) 298-7151</p>
<p><b>Kentucky River</b>          3rd Friday of each month          Meeting locations vary          Contact Paul Bailey          (606) 884-6280</p>	<p><b>Lake Cumberland</b>          11:30 a.m. (ET), 3rd Monday          The Mellow Mushroom          2520 Monticello St          Somerset, KY          Contact Bruce Brown          (606) 305-9960</p>	<p><b>Lincoln Trail</b>          11:30 a.m. (ET), 2nd Monday          Shoney's          1406 Executive Drive          Elizabethtown, KY          Contact Theresa Wickersham          (270) 300-2453</p>	<p><b>North Central</b>          11:30 a.m. (ET), 2nd Wednesday          Jumbo Buffet          2731 S. Hurstbourne Pkwy          Louisville          Louisville, KY          Contact Suzanne Bernert          (502) 641-7720</p>
<p><b>Northern Kentucky</b>          1:00 p.m. (ET), 2nd Monday          Golden Corral          4770 Houston Rd (KY 842)          Florence          Contact Asom Ponananta          (859) 371-4833</p>	<p><b>Pennyrile</b>          11:30 a.m. (CT), 4th Thursday          Country Cupboard Restaurant          518 McCoy Avenue          Madisonville, KY          Contact L. Peyton Adams          (270) 871-9295</p>	<p><b>Purchase</b>          10:30 a.m. (CT), 1st Thursday          Pizza Inn          Joe Clifton Drive          Paducah, KY          Contact Tom Moore          (270) 898-7289</p>	