



From the President

Debi West

As we step into a new season together, I want to take a moment to express my deep gratitude for our growing RAEA membership. Your commitment to art education and mentorship continues to inspire me daily, and it's exciting to see how each of you is making an impact in your states and communities.

I'd love to hear more about how your state organizations are utilizing their RAEA members. What creative programs or initiatives are you launching to mentor and support art educators? Please share your ideas as we want to highlight and learn from one another!

Here in Georgia, where I serve as the RAEA Director, we launched a new initiative this year called **MMM, Monthly Mentor Minutes**. Each month, I reach out to an active RAEA member and invite them to share tips, tricks, stories, or ideas, anything that will inspire and encourage our members. These contributions are about a page long and it's a one-time commitment, but the impact has been powerful. **The response has been wonderful, and the shared wisdom has truly energized our community.**

Looking ahead, I'm considering bringing this program to the national level in 2026, and I'd love to start gathering MMM contributions earlier rather than later. Here's a question for you: **Should we have specific themes each month, or simply invite inspiring words from our seasoned, outstanding professionals who want to mentor teachers in the field?** I'd love your thoughts!

And speaking of inspiration, a huge shout-out to **Linda Fisher**, who has done an amazing job reorganizing and promoting our **Student Chapter Award**. If you're a higher ed educator with an outstanding preservice student chapter, encourage your students to apply! There's a monetary award and national recognition involved, so be sure to **read Linda's article below for all the details.**

Our RAEA Board of 14 met in early October, and we have some exciting plans to share with you this spring in Chicago. Stay tuned!

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Remember, our mission is to mentor and share. Don't be shy—reach out to me and share your magic. Together, we can continue to grow, advocate for art education, and support the teachers in the field who need us most.

During this season of thanks, please know that I am deeply thankful to you all!

So Sincerely,

Debi West

Here are six monthly examples of MMM. You should be able to click on the image and expand to read. Contact Debi about contributing.



RAEA Outstanding Preservice Chapter Award (OPCA)

Linda M. Willis Fisher, Ed.D.

RAEA Liaison for Preservice Initiatives

RAEA Purpose Statement: To define and establish the role of the retired art educators as an interest group of NAEA; to conduct programs of professional activities for state and national events; to encourage continued personal involvement and development in art education; to inform State Associations and NAEA of concerns relevant to members of long-standing; and to encourage and support, as well as provide mentorship for, student members of the NAEA.

I am happy that the RAEA Interest Group is able to support NAEA preservice members through chapter recognition and mentorship.

RAEA Outstanding Preservice Chapter Award (OPCA)

The RAEA Interest Group is pleased to announce that the RAEA Outstanding Chapter Award has been reinstated and renamed the *RAEA Outstanding Preservice Chapter Award (OPCA)*.

Kudos to Paula Liz, NAEA Youth and Preservice Program Manager; Krista Brooke, Chief Strategy and Communications Officer (CAE); and other NAEA staff members who reviewed the documents and arranged the uploading of the documents on the Preservice and RAEA links on the NAEA website.

The Description, Application and Rubric can be viewed on the RAEA link:

<https://www.arteducators.org/community/interest-groups/retired-art-educators-alliance-raea/>

The RAEA [OPCA posting and link](#) have been emailed to all preservice members and will be shared again via email in the coming weeks.

Hopefully, we will have many applications for the 2026 Outstanding Preservice Chapter Award!!

Mentoring

Other good news is that there are Monthly Meeting Mentor Meetings scheduled. All NAEA members are welcome to participate—whether you're starting the teaching journey or an experienced educator ready to share your expertise.

Check out details on the Preservice link:

<https://www.arteducators.org/preservice-students/>

2025–2026 Mentor Meeting Dates:

All sessions are held online from 7:00–8:00 pm ET.

- Tuesday, October 28, 2025
- Tuesday, November 18, 2025
- Thursday, January 29, 2026
- Tuesday, February 17, 2026
- March 4–7, 2026: NAEA National Convention – Chicago, IL
- Thursday, April 2, 2026
- Thursday, May 7, 2026

We are pleased that RAEA members will have the opportunity to help ...*provide mentorship for student members of the NAEA by being involved in this program.*

[Click here to register!](#)

If you have questions reach out to Linda Willis Fisher, RAEA Liaison for Preservice Initiatives at lmwfis@ilstu.edu

NAEF Fundraising Drive

Donate today and make an investment in the future of visual arts education. Your contribution will help provide professional development for art educators, classroom supplies for innovative projects, curriculum development for art classrooms, and ground-breaking research in visual arts education.

Please make a commitment to the advancement of visual arts education by contributing to the National Art Education Foundation (NAEF). NAEF acknowledges all donations. Donors can expect an automatic acknowledgement for online donations. All donors, including those who submit donations online, along with membership dues, or through check by mail, will receive a separate letter of acknowledgement in the month following the donation.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Congratulations to Melody Weintraub

Congratulations to our President-Elect for *being selected as the co-editor* of the **2026 School Arts Magazine Advocacy Issue** with Frank Juarez. Per Melody, "If you have a great way that you have implemented the importance of Arts Advocacy in your classroom, community or state, we would love for you to submit an article. Make sure you designate it: 'Advocacy Issue per Melody Weintraub.' So we can consider it! Deadline is November 15, 2025. Here's a link to the Writer's Guidelines: <https://www.davisart.com/schoolarts/write-for-schoolarts> "

Trivia

November Answer

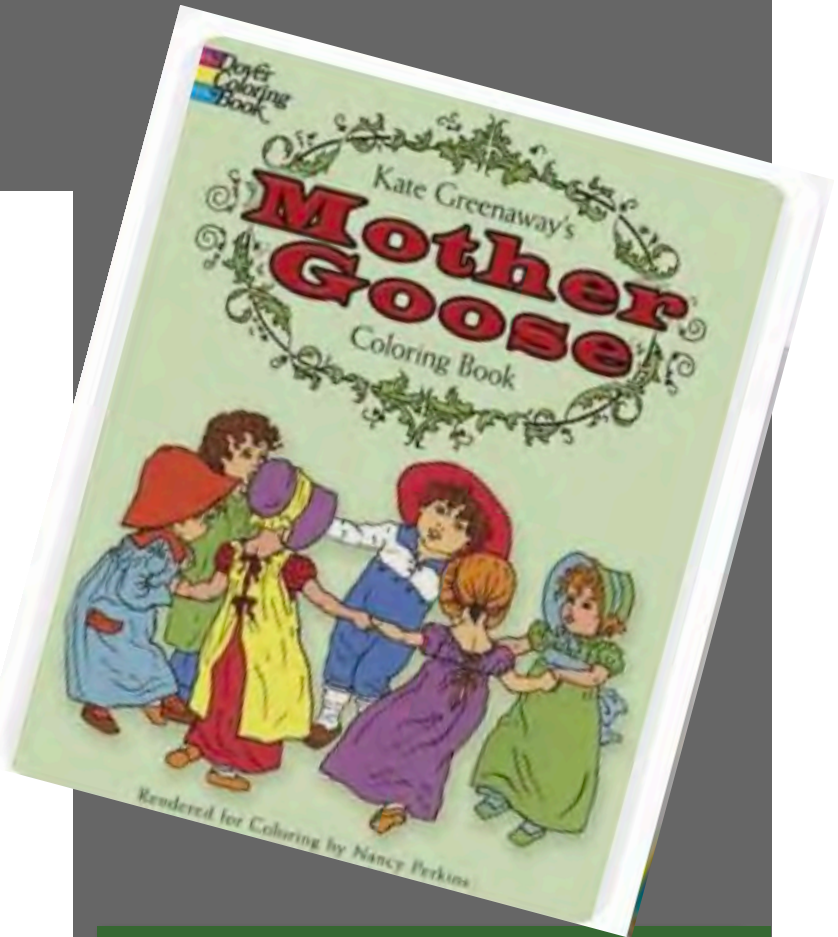
Trivia Question:

Who invented the first coloring book?

The McLoughlin Brothers

The McLoughlin Brothers popularized the coloring book in the 1880s when they produced **The Little Folks' Painting Book**, in collaboration with Kate Greenaway.

They continued to publish coloring books until the 1920s, when the McLoughlin Brothers became part of the Milton Bradley Company.



January Question

Speaking of Mentorship and why it matters.

What Florentine Renaissance painter was the first teacher and mentor to a young Michelangelo?

Send answers to Debi West, dewestudio@gmail.com



In the Spotlight

Debi Barrett-Hayes

Florida Art Educator of the Year
Southeastern Art Educator of the Year
NAEA Secondary Art Educator of the Year
Disney American Teacher Award for the Arts
National Milken Educator Award
Christa McAuliffe Award (twice)
Florida State University's Presidential Award

As I enter my 45th year of teaching, a T.S. Elliott quote clearly comes to mind:

**"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."**

That's how I feel about Art & the Teaching of Art!

I am a Florida transplant from Virginia. In the 70's I honed my sign painting skills and brush calligraphy working at the Newport News Shipyard on a Nuclear Submarine and in the Shipyard sign shop. In the early 80's I started teaching Art at the FSU K-12 Lab school.

I officially retired during the pandemic and now call it "Retired *ish*". I am covering for a middle school art teacher on long-term leave at K-12 Maclay School in Tallahassee. I also teach art at a school for students on the autism spectrum. I try to keep myself out of trouble serving on the FAEA & FATE boards focusing on mentoring new art educators. In Florida we affectionately called this RATs mentoring BATs. We will have multiple mentoring sessions in Chicago at NAEA with Melody Weintraub, Sally Chambliss, Betsy Logan, and Debi West. Please come and join us, "Together we ART better!".

I am serving on the FAEA board as the retiree rep and currently participating in the fabulous NAEA SALs program in July. I spent a week at Crystal Bridges Museum in Arkansas. What a wonderful program this is! OMG, y'all... I love it and the people I've met simply amaze me! NAEA is an extended family of creatives that I cherish.

I have come to the realization that I really, really do LOVE what I do & I would do it all over again with more enthusiasm & more energy, if possible. This surprises me because I came into the teaching profession reluctantly. Wow, it's a true revelation to me and now, my only child, Cosby, a professional artist, is teaching Art in Georgia with his artist spouse, Sarah who is the Fulton County Art Education Coordinator at the Fulton Arts Center. Together they are "*Painter Hayes*" & I couldn't be prouder as a mom, artist and art teacher!

I have a renewed spirit, I love this profession and to quote Monty Python, "I'm not dead YET!" so let's get to work retired Art Educators, we have a lot of work still left to do and our new professionals need us. See you in Chi town! **Oh yeah, thanks to my hubby Martin for supporting my crazy ideas all these years and not saying, "Are you really going to wear that?"**



Debi with her art work "Louise" at Maclay Exhibit



Debi and her former intern, Gabbi Roland, Florida's Early Career Award Winner



Debi with "Root Raise" in class at Maclay School



Debi sharing her Chapter with Melody Weintraub at TAEA 2024



Debi with FAEA '24 Keynotes, Cosby & Sarah Painter Hayes

Social Media Information

Hello everyone!

Just a quick reminder about the RAEA Facebook page! Earlier this spring, we had some issues with our security settings. To fix them, I had to reset the system, which unfortunately removed many existing members—and I'm not able to restore them automatically. If you were already part of our page, please submit a new request to join.

To keep our group safe and private, we've updated the membership process. When you request to join, you'll now need to answer three security questions:

- 1. Are you a member of NAEA?**
- 2. What is your member number (we will verify this)?**
- 3. What year did you join NAEA?**

We know this may feel like an extra step, but it's necessary. Every day we receive requests from spammers and scammers trying to gain access. In fact, some even submit multiple fake profiles. To protect our community:

- Requests with question answered must be completed within one week or they will be deleted.
- Answers are verified before approval.
- We review member profiles, and locked or suspicious accounts raise a red flag.
- All posts must now be approved before appearing on the page.



A quick reminder: please do not share posts from other people's pages into the group. If someone wants to share their content, they should post it directly. This prevents scammers from slipping in links or harmful material. We're not censoring—we're simply making sure our page stays safe for everyone.

Our goal is for this Facebook page to remain a private, secure group for NAEA members. You do not have to be retired to join, and we especially encourage those who were accidentally removed during the reset to come back.

Thank you all for your patience and understanding as we improve security. Wishing you a wonderful fall—and please spread the word to your fellow NAEA members about the RAEA Facebook page!

Betsy Logan
RAEA Social Media Chair

In Memoriam Christine Harness

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of our colleague and friend Christine Harness.

Christine Harness was in the Knoxville, Tennessee public school system for over 34 years and in that time was the mentor for many beginning teachers in the system. She was the Director of the Regional Scholastic Art Competition for many years, received the honor of Leadership Education (an extension of the Knoxville Chamber Partnership), a member of the Knox County Curriculum Committee, Treasurer of the Knox County Art Educators (an art advocacy group) and regular supporter and member of community organizations such as the Knoxville Museum of Art and The Art and Culture Alliance of Knoxville. A long-time member of the National Art Education Association and the Tennessee Art Education Association, she received the honor of Tennessee Middle Level Art Educator of the Year and Tennessee Art Educator of the Year from the Tennessee Art Education Association. She was a regular attendee and presenter at the NAEA Conferences across the country.



Christine Harness

She mentored many teachers over her career. Here is an observation and memory from Stan Hilliard, retired art teacher from Bearden High School in Knoxville, Tennessee.

“Christine Harness was always an advocate for the arts and a champion in the cause of learning. Her dedicated desire to meet the needs of children was exemplary. I know these things because I have experienced them firsthand.



**Christine Harness, Radishes,
Watercolor, 22x28**

My initial meeting with Mrs. Harness was as a student teacher. She was my mentoring teacher during this endeavor. The first time I saw her she was standing on a tabletop on one foot proclaiming loudly to a classroom full of mesmerized middle school students, “Look at me! Remember what a contour line is? Use it to draw what you see!” At her command, every pencil in the room was diligently moving across a sheet of newsprint paper in an attempt to capture her form. I remember watching her eyes dart around the room to assess the success of her fledgling artists. She was in control and they were learning.

Seeing real teaching in progress gave me confidence that I was in the right place to learn how to fine-tune my craft as an educator. She taught me to order supplies, plan logical lessons, teach until every student “got it”, and most of all how to connect my ears to my heart.

Caring about children is the core of why she did what she did so very well.”

Retirement from teaching came hard to Christine. She just could not stop. She became involved in starting and running a community gallery so students would have a place outside of school to show their work. She continued to attend art education conferences as a student advocate. Amazingly, almost every time Knox County art educators met at our system-wide meetings, she was there to tell us about some new opportunity she had discovered and wanted to share with us. One of those shared opportunities was the Tennessee Arts Academy. Christine had a longtime involvement with the Academy as both an attendee and a facilitator. She was a lifelong learner and continued to take weekly art classes to learn new things and hone her craft. (She was a member of the Tennessee Watercolor Society but continued to learn with the beginner artists in her classes.)



Christine Harness, Watercolor



Christine Harness, Watercolor

**She will be well remembered
and missed by all
who have known her.
We salute her knowing that
she had a life well lived!**

2026 NAEA NATIONAL CONVENTION | MARCH 5-7



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Social Media Chair: **Betsy Logan**, Alabama, rbjlogan@bellsouth.net

RAEA MISSION STATEMENT

The purposes shall be to define and establish the role of the retired art educators as an interest group of NAEA; to conduct programs of professional activities for state and national events; to encourage continued personal involvement and development in art education; to inform State Associations and NAEA of concerns relevant to members of long-standing; and to encourage and support, as well as provide mentorship for student members of the NAEA.
