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## A Brief History of the NREA Professional Journal

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Guest Editor

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*The Rural Educator*, the professional journal of the National Rural Education Association, was adopted by the organization from one begun by Dr. Richard Fisher at Colorado State University in the late 1970's. Since the journal was already successful and addressed only rural issues, and since the headquarters of the Rural Education Association had been moved to Colorado State with Joe Newlin, a professor there, as the new Executive Director of the group, it made sense to adopt a proven product as their own. Co-editors with Dr. Fisher were Dr. Bill Timpson, also of Colorado State, and Dr. Everett D. Edington of New Mexico State University. The assistant to the Editor was Ms. Brenda Kohrman of Colorado State University.

The first issue, Volume 1, No. 1, was published Spring 1980, with five articles. Of interest is the fact that the first article was entitled "The Home-School Visit: A Useful Tool" written by Dr. Robert C. Newhouse, an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology, College of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Dr. Newhouse offered five useful suggestions for working with parents, as well as five cautions to consider. Now in 2007 Dr. Newhouse is the immediate past-president of NREA and Dean of the College of Education at Kansas State University.

Other articles in that first issue were "Rural Youth and Political Influence Aspirations" co-authored by Mary Olson and David Bills of the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Dr. Everett D. Edington of New Mexico State University at Las Cruces; "Small Districts: Where the Action Is" by Gene Schmidt, the Superintendent of Schools at North Boone Community Unit Schools, Poplar Grove, Illinois; "The Reality of Stress" by G. Kent Stewart, Professor of Educational Administration, College of Education, Kansas State University; and the final article by a reading teacher at Fort Morgan High School in Fort Morgan, Colorado, Shirley Travis. Her article was entitled "An Answer to"—and describes her very successful program in a growing trend of providing reading instruction to high school students. In the fourteen years that Dr. Fisher served as the Editor, the format changed to more professional cover and printing; more articles were included in each issue; and the Editorial Review Board consisted of many more members; and more manuscripts were submitted for review as the organization grew in numbers and national recognition.

Dr. Fisher served as the Editor of the *Rural Educator* until he retired in 1993. At that time, Joe Newlin, the Executive Director of NREA, took over the editorship and

used guest editors from the Editorial Review Board to assist him in selection of articles that had been approved by the Review Board for publication. These editors also edited and organized these articles to send to the printer, Citizens' Press in Fort Collins. Ironically, that first Guest Editor for the Volume 14, Number 2, Winter 1992-1993 edition was Dr. Robert Newhouse, now professor of Education and Director of the Center for Rural Education & Small Schools at Kansas State. The following issue had as Guest Editor Dr. Edward W. Chance, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Director of the Center for the Study of Small/Rural Schools at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Dr. Chance was to serve as Guest Editor three more times before his untimely death. Among others who have served are Dr. Patti Chance of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Joyce Stern, consultant and Rural Education Specialist in Washington, D. C.; Dr. Bruce Barker, then professor at Western Illinois University in Macomb, and again when he became Dean of the College of Education at Southern Utah University; Dr. Ivan Muse and Dr. Scott Ferrin of Brigham Young University, Utah; and Dr. Claudette Morton, Director of the Montana Small Schools Alliance, Helena, Montana. Many, many others contributed their time from busy schedules to serve as Guest Editors and help make the journal more professional for the organization. Dr. Newlin expressed his appreciation many times for their expertise and commitment.

Another change that occurred during 1995 was the inclusion of *The Country Teacher* into each issue of *The Rural Educator*. In 1994 the Executive Board voted not to publish *The Country Teacher* as a separate entity since the membership of NREA did not include many classroom teachers and administrators indicated that they did not read these separate issues. The Board felt that more might read the articles if they were in the major publication and the cost of publication could be reduced.

*The Country Teacher* began in the fall of 1986 with its first issue dated in December of that year. The Editor was David Leo-Nyquist; a teacher in a rural district 200 miles north of San Francisco in the Redwood Country. There were about 1,350 students in his K-12 district, with six elementary schools, a junior high and a senior high school. Many of the families in his district lived in the hills with no running water or electricity. The entire social life revolved around the public schools. Mr. Nyquist (now Dr. Nyquist) edited this excellent publication for rural teachers until the Spring issue 1995. Dr. Pauline Hodges edited the last issue in the Fall 1995, and it was incorporated into the journal the

following winter issue. Dr. Nyquist is now a professor in the Department of English at the University of Vermont.

After Dr. Newlin's death in May 2001, Dr. Pauline Hodges operated the NREA Office at Colorado State University until a search for a new Executive Director was completed and the office moved to the University of Oklahoma. From May 2001 until the publication of the Fall 2002 issue, Dr. Hodges organized the manuscripts that had been approved for publication and edited the journal. She also accepted new submitted manuscripts for review and sent these to the Editorial Review Board. She, like Dr. Newlin, recognized the value of using the expertise of members of the Editorial Review Board as Guest Editors. These guest editors who helped in this time of crisis and transition were as follows: Dr. Mike Copeland, Superintendent of Schools at Altus, Oklahoma, and Patti Chance of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Dr. Mike Boone of Southwest Texas State University and Dr. Marilyn Grady of the University of Nebraska; Dr. Hobart Harmon, Consultant to The Rural Schools Initiative of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville; Dr. Scott Ferrin of Brigham Young University and Dr. George Pawlas of the University of Central Florida. Without their assistance, it would have been extremely difficult to produce the journal at the excellent level Dr. Newlin had developed. The final issue under Dr. Hodges' direction used Dr. Robert Newhouse again as Guest Editor; this time he was listed as Assistant Dean, College of Education, Kansas State University.

In the months following the selection of Dr. Robert Mooneyham as the Executive Director of NREA and the moving of the headquarters to the University of Oklahoma, Dr. Mooneyham assumed the Editorship of the journal. The first issue under his direction was Fall 2002. He brought a new format and focus to the journal, using photos of rural schools and a more modern cover. The first Guest Editors were Dr. Mary Lou Gammon, an independent educational

consultant and Adjunct Professor at the University of Northern Arizona University, and Dr. Robert Newhouse, now Dean of Education, Chair of the Department of Foundations and Adult Education, and Director of the Center for Rural and Small Schools for Kansas State University. This issue also included *The Country Teacher* article entitled, "Making Mathematics Accessible to More Students with SIMMS" by Cliff Knighton, a teacher in Bridger, Montana. However, this was the last issue to include articles for *The Country Teacher*.

In the fall of 2003 a new editor was sought. Dr. Patti Chance of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas was selected and the editorial offices moved to that institution, and Dr. Chance assumed editorship in the Spring of 2004. Again the cover and format changed. Full color photos of rural schools were used, and the articles to some extent became more scholarly and research based. The Editorial Review Board has met in February of 2005, 2006, and 2007 to give input and constructive criticism to Dr. Chance on ways to improve the journal. In 2006 under the leadership of Dr. Jody Isernhagen, a Board of Reviewers was appointed to assist with the selection of articles.

The journal has evolved into a major publication in the field of rural education and is distributed far beyond the NREA membership to libraries, universities, regional educational centers, and to other countries.

In the following pages are examples of those changes that reflect how the parent organization has changed, how rural schools and issues have changed, how technology has changed rural education, and how these changes are reflected in the NREA professional journal. We, the Guest Editors, have included here an article by Dr. Richard Fisher, the first editor, that describes the early beginnings of the first official journal.