

**RA 2019 – HOUSTON  
FEA Delegate Communication #2**

## ***CHECKING IN***

We're about 7 weeks away from the FEA Annual Membership Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly.

At this point, I've received hotel reservation forms from nearly everyone. Thanks for being very responsive to my requests for info! I'll submit our rooming list to the hotel later this month and will send everyone confirmation numbers for your rooms when I get them.

### ***“WHEN DO I NEED TO BE THERE?”***

**Plan to arrive at the hotel by late afternoon on June 30** (I know some of you are arriving a day or two earlier).

The FEA Human & Civil Rights department will host a meeting the **evening of June 30** at the hotel. The meeting is open to all FEA members (please no family or guests who are not Association members).

The FEA Annual Membership Meeting will run **all day July 1** and the **first half of July 2**. That meeting takes place in our hotel.

The NEA-RA will begin with registration July 3 and full sessions running July 4-7. Transportation will be provided to the George R. Brown Convention Center in downtown Houston.

**Delegates should plan to depart Houston on July 8 (or very late on July 7).**

### ***“WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?”***

Your primary responsibility right now is to plan your travel to/from Houston.

Delegates are responsible for making their own travel arrangements (see “How Do I Get There?” below)

There are several optional evening events and other activities you may wish to participate in during the week (details below). If so, you need to contact Gary about some of them.

## **NEA-RA SITE**

Go to [ra.nea.org](http://ra.nea.org) for information on the NEA Representative Assembly. Much of the info on the site is still from the 2018 NEA-RA but NEA is beginning to post agenda information and other details. By the time the RA convenes, this site will be your one-stop shop for all things related to the NEA gathering.

## **“WHERE ARE WE STAYING?”**

Our hotel is the Royal Sonesta hotel, located several miles west of downtown Houston, near the Galleria shopping mall and a number of dining/shopping options.  
<https://www.sonesta.com/us/texas/houston/royal-sonesta-houston-galleria>

**IMPORTANT: IF YOU NEED TO MAKE ANY CHANGES TO YOUR HOTEL RESERVATION, DO NOT CONTACT THE HOTEL DIRECTLY. CHANGES MUST BE SENT TO GARY HRITZ, FEA’S MEETING COORDINATOR, AT [GHRITZ@NEA.ORG](mailto:GHRITZ@NEA.ORG)**

## **“HOW DO I GET THERE?”**

### **DRIVING**

The Royal Sonesta is located at 2222 West South Loop, Houston, TX 77027.

Parking rates currently are \$34 daily for valet parking and \$24 daily for self parking.

### **FLYING**

Houston is served by two airports:

*Walter P. Hobby Airport* – the smaller of the two airports and slightly closer to downtown, located south of downtown Houston.

**Distance to Royal Sonesta: 18 Miles**

**Estimated SuperShuttle Charge (one way): \$24**

*George Bush Intercontinental Airport* – larger and located in the northern Houston suburbs.

**Distance to Royal Sonesta: 28 Miles**

**Estimated SuperShuttle Charge (one way): \$27**

## **TRAIN**

Houston Amtrak Station is located downtown, approximately 9 miles to the Royal Sonesta.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

There is no direct public transportation from either airport or the train station to the Royal Sonesta. The hotel recommends using SuperShuttle ([www.supershuttle.com](http://www.supershuttle.com)), taxis or ride share services (Uber, Lyft) as transportation options. There is NO hotel shuttle to/from the airport, though there is a hotel shuttle that can transport guests within 3 miles of the hotel at no charge.

***A NOTE ABOUT TAXIS: Avoid Them To/From the Airport!!*** Houston taxis use a zone system for travel to/from airports. You can expect to pay \$70-\$80 for a taxi from either airport to our hotel. Supershuttle is the cheapest option, but shuttle routes may first go to downtown hotels so the trip could take you an hour or more (much more, if there's traffic). We sure to ask about the schedule at the airport Supershuttle desk (located near baggage and rental cars) before you purchase a ride. Uber and Lyft are recommended as "middle of the road" options.

## ***EVENING ACTIVITIES***

In addition to the FEA and NEA events taking place during the days, there are several evening events throughout the week delegates can choose to attend. Some events (the NEA HCR Awards and the NEA-GLBTQ+ event) require an RSVP in advance to secure tickets.

### **June 30**

*FEA HCR Program Diversity Training*

***Royal Sonesta Continental III meeting room***

*5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. – light buffet for delegates and members only*

*6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. – training session*

The traditional opening event of the week. **RSVP is not required** but the event is open only to delegates and other Association members (no family members or non-member guests, please). FEA will pay one room night for all Local delegates who attend.

### **July 1**

*American Foreign Service Protective Association (AFSPA) reception*

***Royal Sonesta Continental Level balcony***

*6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.*

FEA and its members have a long history with AFSPA and we are grateful to them for again hosting this welcome reception. Beer, wine and light cuisine/hors d'oeuvres will be served. **Family members and guests are welcome to attend.**

### July 3

*NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Program*

**George R. Brown Convention Center – General Assembly Theatre**

*5:00 p.m. – General Reception*

*6:30 p.m. – Awards Program*

\*\* Attire: Cocktail Formal

**Tickets are \$35** (price does not include food)

The Human and Civil Rights Award program honors members and non-members for their work and achievements promoting the rights of others. **Note:** as was the case in 2018, the event is no longer a dinner; it is a theatre-seated awards program.

(Think of it as being more like the Oscars than the Golden Globes) Cocktail formal dress is encouraged but any reasonably dressy outfit is fine. FEA has purchased a block of 15 tickets for this event. They are available on a first-come basis. Payment can be made in Houston. If you would like to attend, send a message to Gary at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org), noting the number of tickets you would like to purchase. First-time delegates or any member who served this year (or will serve next year) as an HCR Coordinator may attend for free (you must reserve a seat through Gary, however). Non-delegates and family members may attend this event but tickets must be purchased for them. **RSVP to Gary is required to secure a seat before they are all gone.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Unlike past years, **NEA will NOT be providing bus transportation to/from the HCR Awards** event. Delegates must arrange their own transportation via Uber/Lyft or taxi.

### July 6

*NEA GLBTQ+ Caucus Dinner*

**Hilton America's Houston hotel, 1600 Lamar St.**

*6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. – Reception*

*7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – Dinner*

*9:00 p.m. – Midnight – Dancing*

**Tickets are \$75**

Every year at the NEA-RA, the NEA GLBTQ+ Caucus hosts a special evening that includes dinner, dancing, guest speakers and recognition of the work of members and educators for the civil and human rights of our members and students. Michael Priser has purchased 2 tables (20 tickets) for our State Caucus (FEA). This event will be attended by nearly 1000 educators. This year the Dinner will be on the evening of July 6 at the Hilton America's Houston, located downtown (**transportation is NOT provided for this event; delegates must arrange their own rides**). The cost of ticket will be \$75/person (same as in past years). The event usually sells out. If you are interested in going, send an email to Michael at [mwpriser@yahoo.com](mailto:mwpriser@yahoo.com). Delegates can pay Michael in Houston.

## ***LIKE TO SING?***

NEA is looking for two singers from each State affiliate to participate in the NEA Choir at the RA. Participants sing a medley of songs in front of the full RA (sorry, we've no idea what the songs will be). If you're a singer and would like to shine on stage, send your name and your vocal range (alto, tenor, bass, etc.) to Gary by June 1.

***Questions about any aspect of the FEA/NEA meetings?***  
***Please contact Gary Hritz at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org) or 202-822-7855***

## ***Your TO DO List:***

1. Start working on your travel arrangements to/from Houston. Plan to arrive at the Royal Sonesta by late afternoon June 30 and to depart anytime on July 8 (unless you indicated otherwise on your reservation form).
2. Consider the evening event options you want to attend and plan to keep those evenings free. RSVP for the NEA HCR Awards and NEA-GLBTQ+ Caucus events if you wish to attend those.
3. Visit **[ra.nea.org](http://ra.nea.org)** to begin familiarizing yourself with meeting materials and check back often for more updates.
4. If you want to be part of the NEA RA Choir, send your name and vocal type to Gary by June 1.

**(see next page for full agenda)**

## THE AGENDA SO FAR

(More events will likely be added as the meeting dates approach)

All FEA events to be held at The Royal Sonesta Hotel, 2222 West Loop South, Houston, TX 77027

All NEA events to be held at the Houston Convention Center (NEA will provide transportation for all delegates between our hotel and the convention center)

### June 30

- 5:30pm – 8:30pm – Diversity training session hosted by FEA Human & Civil Rights Department – Royal Sonesta Hotel in Champions III
- A light buffet of soup, salads and sandwiches will be available between 5:30 and 6:30 for delegates who attend. The meeting and training session will begin at 6:30pm and last until about 8:30pm. (Delegates and Association members only, please.)

### July 1

- 8am-5pm – FEA Annual Membership Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 6pm-8pm – American Foreign Service Protective Association (AFSPA) Reception for FEA Delegates and guests. Light hors d'oeuvres and an open bar will be provided – Royal Sonesta, balcony outside Champions rooms (Family members and guests are welcome to attend)

### July 2

- 8am-12:30pm – FEA Annual Membership Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 12:30pm-1:30pm – **NEW DELEGATES TRAINING** – site to be determined, lunch will be provided
- 1:30pm-3pm – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V

### July 3\*

- 8am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
  - 9am-5pm – Delegate Registration and NEA Expo, Houston Convention Center (transportation provided to/from hotel)
  - 6pm-10pm – NEA HCR Awards Program – Houston Convention Center
- Information on reserving tickets for this event will be included in a future delegates' newsletter. Please Note: In a change from years past, NEA will NOT be providing bus transportation between hotels and the HCR awards program – delegates will need to arrange their own transportation (taxi, Uber/Lyft) to and from the event. Tickets are limited; RSVP to Gary to reserve one.

**July 4\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am-6pm – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

**July 5\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am-6pm – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

**July 6\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am-6pm – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

**July 7\***

- 7am-9am – FEA Delegate Caucus Meeting – Royal Sonesta, Champions V
- 10:00am until whenever the meeting ends – NEA Representative Assembly – Houston Convention Center (transportation provided)

*\*Delegates will be provided with a voucher good for breakfast in the hotel's restaurant on the dates with asterisks (July 3-7). The restaurant opens at 6:30am. Please plan to eat prior to the start of our caucus meeting each morning. No other meals will be provided except where noted in the above agenda.*

**Questions about any aspect of the FEA/NEA meetings?  
Please contact Gary Hritz at [ghritz@nea.org](mailto:ghritz@nea.org) or 202-822-7855**