

Miner Matters

Welcome Back!!



Negaunee Education Association
906.475.7866

September, 2008

NEA Leadership

Executive Board
President – RaeAnn Loy
Vice-president – Pete Ruokola
Treasurer – Lori Boase
Secretary – Karen Plaisier

Professional Negotiations Team

Grievance Committee
Wendy Beacco
Kevin Bell
Lisa Bigalk
Mark Churchill
Pete Ruokola



PAC Chair
Vickie Paupore

Get Involved!

We are looking for dynamic, energetic, talented members who are interested in enhancing communication with members, parents, the media, and the general public. If you are interested in helping with this newsletter or serving on a communications committee, please email RaeAnn Loy on the district email

Welcome New Staff Members!!

The Negaunee Education Association would like to welcome the following staff members to our district:

- Heather Tafoya – High School Guidance Counselor
- Katie Korpi – Young Fives
- Catherine Moilanen – Orchestra
- Joe Wahlman – High School English
- Barb Savolainen – Elementary Art
- Nicole Coduti – Kindergarten
- Kellie Boase – ½ time Elementary
- ½ time Assistant Principal
- Cindy Sue Kendall – ½ time specials
- Michelle Anderson – part time specials

The MEA website provides important information for new members. If you would like to receive New Member Tips, go to www.mea.org and sign up to receive these by email.

General information and procedures will be covered by the administration in the buildings; however, the following areas of the contract may be of interest:

- Sick & Business Leave – Article XI (p 18)
- Seniority – Article X, Sec. Sec. II (p 16)
- Standard Work Day–Article VI, Sec. A (p9)
- School Cancellation - Article VI, Sec. D (p 10)
- Compensation – Article V (p 5) NOTE Sec. C

Staff Spotlight



Jon Matthews

The NEA Leadership would like to recognize Jon Matthews for nearly 30 years of service to the Negaunee Education Association. Jon has been active in the union since his second year of teaching when he joined the PN team. He's negotiated numerous contracts, has served as vice president and has been our president for the last two terms.



Jon began teaching in Negaunee in 1978. Except for a brief stint at the Middle School, all of his years have been in the elementary. Jon notes that when he first began teaching, there were 17 males on the elementary staff. Now there are only three! Jon recalls getting some helpful advice from Jack Boase and Fred Benzie when he first started teaching.

Over the years, Jon has seen a few major changes to our contract as well. In 1981, for example, the salary index was changed. The change, which was patterned after Westwood's contract, resulted in a raise of around \$4,500 for some members! It was under this contract that Negaunee went to the MESSA-PAK system, giving

members who had insurance provided by a different carrier another option. Another major change, which took place in 1986, was going to the seven period day.

Jon lives in Ishpeming with his wife, Ann. He enjoys camping and spending time outdoors.

Hats off to Jon for his ardent display of unionism over the length of his career.

Cutting Costs

Most of us felt the effects of switching to the 10/20 drug card last year. There are a couple of ways to cut down on prescription and medical costs.

Consider contributing pre-tax money to a BASIC Flex plan. Use the medical election worksheet in the BASIC Flex packet to estimate out of pocket prescription and medical expenses and determine the amount you would like to have deducted for the year. Remember that if you don't use the full amount you had deducted, you will not be refunded your money, so you may want to be conservative on your estimate.

Dependent care costs are also eligible for this plan and can result in substantial savings.



You can manage your account on-line and reimbursement checks can be direct deposited to your bank account.

To save some cash on maintenance prescriptions, consider using Medco by mail. This service gives you three months of prescriptions for the price of two. Several area pharmacies have adopted this plan as well.

Dues and Dos!

Dues will be deducted from paychecks beginning on September 12th. Local dues total \$10 a month and are deducted from the first pay of the month over 10 pays. MEA dues, calculated using a sliding scale, are deducted over 20 pays. For new folks, this means that dues aren't deducted during the summer months.

Please **do** give serious consideration to contributing to PAC. Dues money cannot be used for political action. PAC money is used to screen and help elect political candidates or support legislation that is positive to public education. Forty percent of PAC money is used locally.

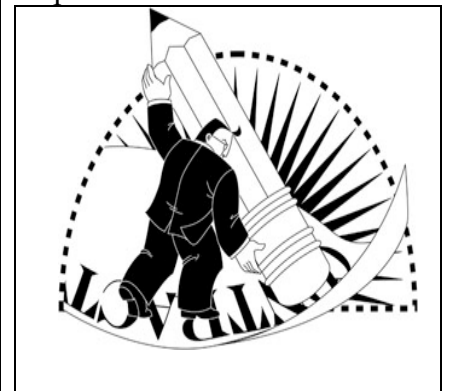
Many members choose to give to PAC at the beginning of the school year. **Up to \$20 cash may be given in a PAC envelope.** Members can also give to PAC with a credit card or check. Payroll deduction is yet another option. Don't feel obligated in any way to contribute the suggested amount. Anything you can afford will be much appreciated!

Remember that the MEA is out there representing your interests and the interests of public education overall. Our collective voice can be heard, but we all need to pitch in.

Contract Corner Gripe or Grievance?

Occasionally issues arise that may cause a member to question whether an administrative decision or practice is fair or allowable. All grievances are gripes; however, not all gripes are grievances. A grievance is designed to address a specific violation of contract language or contract practice. The grievance process is outlined in Article XX of your contract (pages 27-31).

Obviously a grievance is a last resort. Many issues can be resolved through communication with the parties involved. However, if you believe the contract has been violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied, and have not been able to resolve the issue on your own, contact your building representative for help.



Building Reps

One way to get involved in the NEA is to become a building representative. Building reps are chosen by each building in the fall of each year. Current building reps are as follows:

Lakeview: Mary Ganfield
Lori Waters

Middle School: RaeAnn Loy
Karen Plaisier

High School: Marius Grazulis