

Dear MPEA Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to, once again, attend the Bargaining, Political Action and Public Relations Conference in Dearborn. The conference is a great way to keep abreast of current issues affecting all of us now and as we look ahead to retirement.

One of the sessions I attended was called "New Teacher Issues: Reaching the Next Generation of Leaders." As a member of the bargaining team, I see the need to include, educate and energize our new members to actively participate in order to continue the efforts of past and present leaders. It is important for bargaining members to know what new members need from their union. The session provided ideas, suggested contract language and formats for sparking interest, and "new member issues".

Two other sessions I attended focused on strengthening the bonds between ESP (Educational Support Personnel) and EA (Education Association) units. The presenters were members of a bargaining team consisting of representatives from each MEA unit in their district. They "went to the table" together presenting a united front and have been successful in getting settlements that are "fair and equitable" for all the members of all the units. They decided to bargain this way because they were tired of the administration trying to pit one unit against the other. Hm-m-m.

This is a summary from only two of the ten sessions I attended. If you would like additional information about these sessions or would like to discuss the other sessions I attended, please contact me. I am fortunate to be one of nine people from our MPEA who attended the conference this year. We are well represented EVERY year—thanks to all of you.

In Solidarity,

Jane Leroux-Evans

#### SAC n SNACK

Members gathered at the SAC at CMU on Saturday, March 11 for fun activities and snacks. A great time was had by all – racquetball, billiards, exercise, and conversation. Let's do it again!!!!



## Upcoming Dates

### Regular Board Meeting

Monday, March 20

6:30 at MPHS

### MPEA Executive Board

Thursday, April 6

4:30 La Seniorita

All members are invited to join us to honor our Bargaining Team.

### Committee of Whole Board Meeting

Monday, April 10

6:30 Kinney

### General Membership Meeting

Thursday, April 20

4:30 Rm 111 High School

Elections!

## Bargaining, Political Action, and PR Conference

Every year in early February the MEA puts on a phenomenal conference in Dearborn at the Hyatt Regency Hotel near Greenfield Village. The MEA believes that the 3 Keys to building "full capacity locals" are Bargaining, Political Action, and Public Relations. Our bargaining team regularly attends these conferences to soak up all of the new info. This year 9 of our members attended. **Diane Benford**, Professional Rights & Responsibilities (PR &R) Chairperson, attended sessions that reinforced the importance of staying informed of current legislation and communicating with our local legislative reps on issues that affect our future health insurance and retirement benefits. She attended a session on how to represent a member when an accusation has been made. One of the sessions was a summary of court cases where teachers were sued for things that happened on the job. The speaker reinforced that we need to be careful and not put ourselves in questionable situations. **Karen Turnbull**, Internal Communication Chairperson, attended sessions on Public Relations/Communications including "Getting Your Message Out", "Making the Media Work for You", and "Turn Bad News into Good PR".

## From the desk of the President

### Staffing

As March kicks off, so does the annual flood of rumors about who is retiring, what positions will be kept or cut for next year, etc. I will renew my yearly appeal that members please refrain from engaging in speculation about jobs and bumping.

It is inappropriate to ask others when they plan to retire. One of the most difficult things to listen to each year is a teacher discussing how hurt they were when a colleague appeared to be pressuring them to retire. I ask you to be cognizant of how stressful the staffing process can be, and help quash the speculation that can put added pressure on our colleagues. Last year I had fewer complaints about this than in any year since I have been an active association member and I appreciate the efforts of the many members who took an active role in downplaying the speculation game.

### MEA Lobby Day a Success for Mt. Pleasant

Three MPEA members and a Board member formed a team to attend MEA lobby day in Lansing on February 22, 2006. Pam Dosenberry joined Sue Horgan, Rosa Johnson, and Rick Trainor for the day that included hearing from MEA lobbyists on the status of the budget, the High School Initiative, and retirement issues. The lobbyists made it clear that if school employees don't stay in touch with their legislators and the issues that are important to us, then we are going to continue to see attacks on our revenues, our benefits, and our retirement. All are currently under attack in one form or another.

We were able to observe the House education committee hearing on the new high school requirements for about 30 minutes. Mike Chapo, our Coordinating Council Chairperson from Farwell addressed the committee and challenged the one-size-fits-all concept. He was questioned at length by the committee and stood his ground to challenge the idea of one curriculum prescribed for all students.

Our team then met with Bill Caul for over a half an hour and with Senator Alan Cropsey for about the same length of time. We were able to make our case that schools need to be funded to achieve both the goals of the state and of local districts and we also addressed local control and the high school curriculum. Both men were cordial, but neither committed to support increased funding. Both indicated they didn't see rushing the new high school requirements into effect for this fall as a feasible option.

Senator Cropsey compared the amount of money spent on insurance for teachers by comparing teachers average insurance costs to the cost of his own insurance. He did not compare his salary of over \$78,000 to the average teacher's salary.

We discussed working together to make visits to the capitol to meet with our legislators a more frequent event.

-Rick

### A QUICK QUIZ on Teacher's Rights!

by Rosa Johnson

I would like to thank MPEA for the opportunity to attend the Bargaining Conference in Dearborn in February. It was by far the best conference I have every attended. The sessions I attended addressed the hot topics that have bargaining implications (the pupil protection laws, high school reform, AYP, representation issues when members' jobs are in jeopardy, etc). I attended a session on "Advocating for Members Accused of Misconduct." As a building rep I found this to be very relevant, and was blown away with the court cases and situations where teachers were found guilty of misconduct. Try this short quiz:

#### True or False:

- Teachers have the right to use physical force to stop one student from hurting another student?
- In the privacy of your home, it is O.K. to talk about a student's progress or behavior with your spouse?
- Teachers may ask students to come to class equipped with a pencil or a pen and a notebook with paper, provided the request is made of all students and these supplies are reasonably priced.
- The school district employing a teacher must serve notice to the teacher that his/her teaching certificate is about to expire.
- A student tells his teacher that another student just purchased an illegal handgun. The teacher now has a legal responsibility to search the other student's locker and question the other student about whether or not the handgun is on school property.

How did you do? Did you know the answers? If yes, GREAT; if no, stock up on malpractice insurance.

I. T. 2. F. 3. F. 4. F. 5. F

## Contract Corner

### Our New Master Agreements

The proofreading process for the new master agreements has been extremely difficult. With three years worth of notes and Tentative Agreements to go back through, it has been a very tedious process. I know that many are anxious to get their new copies. The MPEA team should complete its proofing this week and then the administration team will review it for errors. Well over half of the members have elected to receive the contract in electronic form this year. Once the administration has proofed it, delivery will only take a few days.



Andrea Hofmeister receiving her award from MMEA president Randi L'hommedieu



**A Technology Tip from  
Marilyn**

You can check your  
Groupwise email from any  
computer anywhere in the  
world.

Go to <http://gw.mtpleasant.edzone.net>. It  
will give you a prompt for your name and  
password, and voila!!

## **OPEN MPEA Positions!**

### **Here are positions for election in April**

Written nominations may be submitted to Rebekah Eichorn at MPHS beginning now and continuing thru the April 20, 2006 General Membership meeting. Elections will be by secret ballot by building on three successive days following the General Membership meeting. Any positions for which there are the same number of candidates as there are vacancies will be elected by acclamation at the April 20 meeting.

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President** Currently held by Kathy Ling who is retiring.

Term to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08

Works with the President to ensure that the Association conducts business in accordance with Association bylaws. Serves as Ex Officio member of at least one standing committee. Chairs special committees as necessary. Serves on the Sick Leave Bank Appeal Board. Fulfills the duties of the president in his absence.

**Coord. Council Delegate** Currently held by Val Wolters.

Term to begin 9-1-06 thru 8-31-08

The coordinating council is a group of locals from our geographic area. It includes Shepherd, Mt. Pleasant, Clare, Farwell, CMU, Houghton Lake, Gladwin, Roscommon and Harrison. The Coordinating Council Delegate is an MPEA Executive Board member and attends council meetings in August, October, January, March and May. The delegate reports to the council on the current issues in Mt. Pleasant and carries any relevant information back to the Executive Board. The delegate is also responsible for submitting MPEA's request for Zone Training Funds.

**Treasurer** Currently held by Robin Mower.

**2 terms** One to begin immediately and end August 31, 2006

One to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08

Maintains the Association financial records. Works with the President and committee chairpersons to reimburse members who incur expenses for Association business. Works with the President to develop a budget to present to the Executive Board each fall. Works with the membership chairperson to insure that MEA/NEA dues are transmitted in a timely fashion. May work with a CPA and or the president to prepare the annual non profit organization tax returns. Attends monthly Executive Board meetings and prepares a monthly report on the status of the Association's spending.

**1 MEA Ra Delegate** Currently held by Rohnna Bridget

Term to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08

Serves as a delegate to the MEA region 12 meetings in October, December, February and April. Attends the MEA RAs in Lansing in the last weekend in April or first weekend in May and the second weekend in November

**MEA RA Alternate #1** Currently vacant.

Term to begin immediately and concluding 8-31-07

Fulfills the duties of the MEA RA delegate if the delegate cannot attend a scheduled meeting.

**MEA RA Alternate #2** Currently held by Al Bowerman.

Term to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08

**NEA RA Delegate #2** Currently held by Cindy Smith.

Term to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08

Serves as a delegate to the MEA region 12 meetings in October, December, February and April. Is a delegate to the NEA RA conducted annually during the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Attends NEA RA when funding is available.

**NEA RA Alternate #2** Currently vacant.

Term to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08

Fulfills the duties of the NEA RA delegate if the delegate cannot attend a scheduled meeting

**NEA RA Alternate #2** Currently vacant. Fulfills the duties of the NEA RA delegate if the delegate cannot attend a scheduled meeting. Term to begin 9-1-06 and concluding 8-31-08