

Governor's Aide Speaks to MNEA RA

Those who have known Patrick Smith as staff of TEA knew that his voice in the governor's office would be a valuable one for education in Tennessee. At the midway point of Phil Bredesen's term, no one could challenge his interest in raising the level of public schools in the state. The first two years have shown improved appropriations in a very challenging budget situation. Surely everyone understands that we must have friends in positions to make positive decisions in such situations. We are grateful to Mr. Bredesen and his advisors for these improvements.

Patrick Smith said that he did not intend for his greetings from the Governor's office to be a *TennCare* speech, but problems of \$650 million dollars have to be handled somehow. "It's the same pie. The question is how are the pieces going to be divided? The pie doesn't get larger just because more dollars are required for another part next year." Smith said that the governor is committed to protecting all 612,000 children whose only health insurance is *TennCare*. He said that he should not "let the cat out of the bag" in revealing too much of the Governor's State of the State speech which was to come on January 31, but he said the governor is committed to fully funding the BEP program, and expanding the Pre-K pilot

programs which have been effective thus far. The state lottery law provides that money raised from the games may be used for college scholarships, Pre-K, after-school programs, or K-12 construction. Those funds may not be used to fund BEP or salaries. He protected the Governor's specific plans, but said that they include licensed teachers, not just daycare workers, and that he hopes to include all 4 year olds, not just at-risk children. These goals were part of the governors speech. He said that TEA's chief lobbyist, Jerry Winters had been in the office that very day, helping to shape the program into workable proposals.



He thanked the representatives for their involvement in the political process, noting that "nearly everything that happens in a public school comes from a political decision: value-added, employee benefits, working hours, duty-free lunch, etc." Teachers must let their voices be heard and cast their ballots for people who understand their issues.

Black History Month

The Minority Affairs Committee will be holding the **2005 African American History Fair** on Saturday, February 26, 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. at the MNEA building. The public is invited.

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." We owe this celebration and more importantly, the study of black history, to Dr. Carter G. Woodson who was disturbed to find in his studies that history books largely ignored the black American population and their contribution to the history of this country. This year's theme is "*The Niagara Movement*". Celebrate black history by visiting <http://www.historychannel.com/blackhistory/> and other websites for use in your classroom.

TEACHER NIGHT OUT!

“Education Links The Future To Success”

It's time again!

Tuesday March 8, 2005 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

National Guard Armory - Sidco Drive
(near 100 Oaks Mall)

New this year

The Just For Fun
LINE DANCE COMPETITION

The Rules:

A line shall be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10
Each team shall check in at the stage the night of TNO
Each team shall receive number tags.
Competition time shall be following Prize Drawing II
A tie will be broken with a “line-off” dance

Rules for Judging:

20% Originality
20% Rhythmic Expression
20% Creativity
20% Sequence of Motion
20% Fun Quotient
100%



FOOD FUN PRIZES BOOTHS

The Richard Griffin Band!

- Put on your dancing shoes
- Order your T Shirt and cap
- Item\$ for purchase from some vendors\$!
- **PHOTO ID REQUIRED TO ENTER**

*We encourage everyone to act responsibly.
A message from the Internal Relations Committee*

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Great News From Insurance Trust: No Rate Increase

As most members know, Metro Nashville Public Schools are self-insured, paying for medical claims and pharmacy costs out a fund created by a 75/25% match as negotiated in the *Educational Agreement*. This fund is managed by a Trust composed of three School Board members and three MNEA members (Chair **Dorcel Benson**, **Erick Huth**, and **Bill Moody**). They have worked very hard to provide good coverage for life, health, dental and vision insurance for certificated staff at good prices. It is to every member's advantage that the Trust does a good job in wisely directing this fund. (MNEA works for you every day!)

Last year, a serious deficit arose because the rates were too low to pay the bills, so a price increase was required. Members were asked to use more generic prescriptions instead of advertised brands, and changes were made in the co-pays to encourage this practice. These (and other improvements) now bring the good news that the deficit has been removed, so **no increase is anticipated for this year**. Long-term contracts protect our rates except in dental, and the Trust believes that the 7.5% increase there can be covered by current charges.

In another important move, the Trust is advising members that the co-pay and co-insurance programs for pharmacy will be merged into one on January 1, 2006. This means that all members will be on the co-pay basis for prescriptions at that time.

MNEA Negotiations Pay Off!

One of last year's negotiating points has finally come to fruition with the new special membership plan with the YMCA of Middle Tennessee. Concerned for the health and welfare of our members, MNEA took the initiative (and unexpected ridicule from right-wing extremists talk show hosts) and sought benefits offered other Metro employees. Details are available on the flyer distributed by MNPS. Note particularly that because of this agreement, you will not be charged a joining fee. Rates are based on household income.

TEA & NEA DELEGATE NOMINATION FORMS

In March, MNEA will elect delegates to both the TEA and NEA Representative Assemblies. DELEGATE NOMINATIONS must be submitted to the MNEA office by 5:00 p.m. on February 18, 2005. All members of MNEA are encouraged to submit a nomination form.

It is through the Representative Assemblies that policies for both TEA and NEA are established. The TEA Representative Assembly will be held May 6-7, 2005, at the Nashville Convention Center. MNEA is eligible for approximately 134 delegates.

The NEA Representative Assembly will be held July 1-6, 2005, in Los Angeles, CA. MNEA will have approximately 22 delegates, 4 of which are already filled by the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Finance Officer. Those 4 people were elected as delegates in the MNEA general election. Eighteen (18) MNEA member delegates need to be elected - 17 classroom and 1 supervisor/administrator.

TEA DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

Representative Assembly - May 6-7, 2005
 Nashville Convention Center

Name of Nominee _____ School _____

Home Address _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ School Phone _____

Position: Teacher _____ Admin/Supervisory _____ Race: Black _____ White _____ Other _____

If elected, I agree to attend the meetings of the TEA Representative Assembly.

Signature of Nominee: _____

RETURN TO MNEA-ROUTE 3 BY 5:00 PM, FEBRUARY 18, 2005

NEA DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

Representative Assembly - July 1-6, 2005
 Los Angeles, CA

Name of Nominee _____ School _____

Home Address _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ School Phone _____

Position: Teacher _____ Admin/Supervisory _____ Race: Black _____ White _____ Other _____

If elected, I agree to attend the meetings of the NEA Representative Assembly.

Signature of Nominee: _____ Social Security # _____

RETURN TO MNEA-ROUTE 3 BY 5:00 PM, FEBRUARY 18, 2005

MNEA-PACE Election; Some Spots Still Open

Several positions on the MNEA-PACE Executive Council were filled by election at the January 20, 2005 Representative Assembly. The Council is made up of two members from each of the nine school board districts, so there may be eighteen elected positions. Election is only open to members who live (not necessarily work) in a district. For convenience in passing on this information, this list includes the current School Board Member and our MNEA-PACE Council member(s).

District 1 (Thompson): **Forrest Melton**; one vacancy
District 2 (Blue): **Nicole Kendall**; one vacancy
District 3 (Garrett): **Daphyne Burnett-Jones**; one vacancy
District 4 (Nevill): **Vaughn Hales**; one vacancy
District 5 (Hunt): **Dorcel Benson**; **Stephen Henry**
District 6 (Awipi): **Sharon Doucet**; **Chris Glenn**
District 7 (Kindall): two vacancies
District 8 (Harkey): **Harry McMackin**; **Helen McMackin**
District 9 (Warden): **Tish Bassell**; **Nancy Holland**

Even though there are no immediate elections forthcoming, it is very important that the MNEA-PACE Council remains active, vigilant, and prepared. If you live in one of the districts with vacancies, or if you wish to nominate someone who does, this is your opportunity for democracy in action. Call MNEA (726-1499) for more information.



Jackson Elected to MNEA Executive Board

Yvonne Jackson, Hunters Lane Media Specialist, was elected to the District II Board seat until the regular election. Yvonne replaces **Chris Glenn** who transferred to another MNEA board district.

Retirement Workshop Repeated

Due to the large number who attended last month, and a large number requesting another opportunity to gain the information on retirement, a second Pre-Retirement Workshop is scheduled at MNEA on **Tuesday, February 15** from **4:30 to 6:30 p.m.** Since a light meal is being served, it is very important that all attendees **make a reservation by calling 726-1499** to get on the list. Information on Metro retirement benefits as well as those from the state (TCRS) is offered. Anyone considering retirement in the next few years (and certainly next few months), should attend. There is no charge to members.

Dr. Seuss Orders Deadline

In order to have Read Across America materials ready for distribution at the February 17 Representative Assembly, orders must be at MNEA by 5:00 on February 10. MNEA saves members shipping costs by combining the order. A single-order Cat In The Hat hat costs \$6, plus \$6 shipping. Bought by the hundreds, they are \$5.50 each plus \$14 shipping for a hundred. (Just another example of how we work together for a common good.) MNEA pays the shipping on the combined order. We do not plan to inventory these items from year to year, so it is important that payment be sent with the order.

Go to "nea.org/readacross", then "Cat-alog". Click on "store" and "view the merchandise".

Any item listed at this site may be ordered through MNEA.



More details and up-to-date information at www.mnea.com