

## Chief Ronal Serpas, Educator

Metro Nashville Police Chief Serpas is a former educator, having been on the faculty of Loyola University while he was Asst. Chief in New Orleans. He still understands the important role and function of the teacher as he brought his message to the MNEA Representative Assembly on February 17. Serpas noted that we “cannot arrest our way out of crime; it’s a matter of education”. Education is a major investment of government, including the police department. He noted that 70 police officers are assigned to schools. These are paid out of the police budget; not educational funds. In some parts of Nashville there are as many officers in schools as there are on street patrol during the day watch. He said he believes that the SRO is a good program. It should not be confused as just another disciplinary program but a resource to a school. He sees his first year here as having gone well, but he asked that teachers and officers continue to work together without confusing the roles.

His own experience helps him to understand that there are tremendous impacts upon a young student’s life. The roles of the parent/school/law enforcement officer represents an obvious need for linkage. Serpas’ doctorate demonstrates that he was not a failure. He was able to overcome many challenges, so we must recognize that many students need special help.

Dr. Serpas confided that there are some teen gangs in the city, and we cannot simply ignore these elements. He sees no real linkage to some of the gangs in other major cities. The chief notes that kids seek social acceptance and validation in some form, so we must provide it in ways other than gangs.

MNEA reps were happy to hear of the police work in many Metro Nashville neighborhoods which the

chief called successful. Home burglary is the lowest since 1969; auto theft is down 10%. Armed robbery is down.

There is an increase in the number of reported rapes, which may be viewed as a positive sign of better and increased reporting by victims.

Authorities say that only 4 of 10 rapes are reported. Calls of reports are up 10-15%, but this may be a direct result of better educating citizens on their rights. Sexual predators are the most likely of criminals to repeat their crime, so our Metro Police keep close tabs on their whereabouts. The community support for police shows that they must be doing something right. Communication is the key to a successful community.



## OOPS!

Computer gremlins recently struck at MNEA, resulting in the wrong date being printed on the **Teacher Night Out** tickets. The correct date is Tuesday, March 8, 5:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. We apologize for our mistake.

## Know Your Contract



### ARTICLE VIII

#### D. TERMINAL PAY AT RETIREMENT

- In addition, teachers who notify the Human Resources Department no later than March 15 of their plans to retire upon the completion of their current fiscal year assignment shall receive a five-hundred-dollar (\$500) early notification incentive. (1994)

*2004-2005 Educational Agreement*

## Time Running Out For Dr. Seuss Hats

It is too late to order other items for the NEA *Read Across America* celebration, but MNEA has a supply of the famous Cat In The Hat hats that may be picked up immediately. Apparently teachers have saved their hats from previous years, because purchases have been below those of past years. Cost of one hat from the supplier is \$6 plus \$6 shipping. MNEA buys them by the hundred @\$5.50, and passes them on to members at the same price. We are willing to lose the shipping costs for our members. If you've intended to get one, check your calendar! Dr. Seuss' Birthday is Wednesday, March 2. Reserve your hat before they're all gone. We will not be re-ordering until next year. Free book marks are also available as long as the supply lasts.

*The Slate* is published during the school year by the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, an affiliate of the Tennessee Education Association and the National Education Association.

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## From the President



The seasonal roller coaster ride known as the budget cycle has already started to operate. On March 7, Dr. Garcia will present his first budget draft to the School Board's Finance Committee. This will be followed by numerous steps involving the School Board, City Council, and Mayor's Office culminating in a final approved budget taking effect July 1.

We know too well the reality of the cuts that were necessary last Spring. While teaching positions were preserved, everyone can tell the story of less supply money, fewer psychologists, social workers, support positions, and numerous other cuts.

The new cycle starts with the stark possibility of even deeper cuts. It is estimated that an additional 34.9 million dollars will be needed for next year's budget. If new money does not materialize, we will definitely face even harder times. There are very few "things" left to cut.

The School Funding Task Force recently released their final report (available on the MNPS Home page). No one likes to hear the tax word, but the short term reality is that revenue options are limited.

It is imperative for all of us as professionals to become somewhat conversant in school finance. In the coming months your conversations with parents and elected officials will play a critical role in what kind of school system our students will have in the coming years.

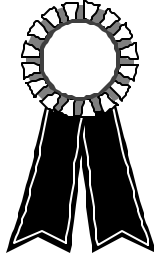
**Ralph Smith**

### Dates to Remember

- March 2 Read Across America Day
- March 7 MNEA-PACE Mtg. 4:30
- March 8 Teacher Night Out, 5-8 p.m.
- March 10 MNEA Executive Board Mtg. 4.30
- March 11 TEA Minority Affairs @ Cool Springs
- March 17 MNEA Representative Assembly 4:30

## Teacher of The Year Finalists

Congratulations to the following MNEA members who were selected among the Finalists to be selected for Metro's 2006 Teacher of the Year award. An elementary, middle and high school winner will be announced on April 4. The three selected as Metro's Teacher of the Year will advance to statewide competition and the winners at the state level will advance to the national competition. Six of the seven finalists are MNEA members: High School: Tina Bozeman (M.L. King); Middle School: Alison Cook (Rose Park); Lori Scott, Antioch Middle; Elementary School: Deborah Drungo (Thomas Edison); Emily Kuhn (Harpeth Valley); and Christina Ward (Granbery). We're proud of our members when they are recognized for their professional excellence. We congratulate you and wish each of you good luck in your endeavor.



## Vouchers - Money Grab?

A recent count in the D.C. federal voucher program last year shows that only 75 of the 1,300 students who used it last year came from schools designated as "in need of improvement". The report from People for the American Way, based on US Department of Education found that 200 of students who obtained vouchers in the program's first year were already enrolled in private schools whose admissions policies allow them "to pick and choose which students to accept." The misleadingly named D.C. School Choice incentive program provides vouchers of up to \$7,500 for as many as 2,000 students.

A rule of thumb for investigators for many years is: **Follow the money!** Who did this money help? Where did it go? Are the "schools in need of improvement" improved as a result?

## New Federal Cuts Reveal Challenges to Public Schools

The President's budget proposals, released earlier this month demonstrate the causes for concern when education is not a priority. Education programs account for one-third of the 150 programs that are to be eliminated or radically cut back. Among those target programs for elimination are the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, The Vocational Education Program, the Perkins Loans Program, GEAR-UP, Upward Bound and the Talent Search programs which help high-risk students succeed in high school and move on to college or technology centers. All told, the \$4.3 billion in education cuts would do away with or drastically scale back services for millions of disadvantaged and middle-class students from kindergarten through college. These proposals come at a time when states and school districts are struggling to pay for the unfunded mandates of "No Child Left Behind" and families face rising college tuitions. All members should contact members of Congress to express concerns.

## Watch for MNEA Scholarship Applications

MNEA is proud of the number of scholarships that have been given through the years to help some Metro student who wanted to prepare for an educational career. This is considered a good investment because several teachers in MNPS positions have gained financial assistance through these grants. The Scholarship Committee will be meeting soon to finalize the plans, parameters, and amounts of this year's scholarships. All high school counselors, principals, and association representatives will have forms very shortly. Scholarships are usually awarded at the last RA of the year, but work in preparation will be starting very soon. Keep alert to announcements to assist some worthy student.

## Spring Break March 21-25

Members should check their Access Card discounts on making plans for your spring break. More than 100,000 companies now offer discounts. If you can stay for half price, perhaps you can go again and again.

**Membership does not cost; it pays!**

## Contacting MNEA

MNEA leaders often receive communication via mnps.org. Please note that e-mails sent via that mail server are public domain and can be requested by any citizen of the state of Tennessee under the Tennessee Open Records Act. If you want to contact a leader of the Association with sensitive or personal information, do one of the following:

1. Go to [www.mnea.com](http://www.mnea.com) to find the individual's personal e-mail account.
2. Send the e-mail to [mymnea@comcast.net](mailto:mymnea@comcast.net) with a note to forward the message to the individual with whom you wish to communicate.
3. Send the individual a message via [mnps.org](http://mnps.org) asking for a personal e-mail address.

If you communicate something via mnps.org, there is a possibility that an agent of the school board will read the message. Employers have a right to review every message sent or received via their e-mail servers. Do not send anything via mnps.org that you would not like to see printed in the newspaper. Also, do not draft any e-mails in anger as such messages may live forever and you may never know to whom the recipient has forwarded your message.

## We Need More TEA Delegates!!

We are still in need of several TEA Delegates. The TEA Representative Assembly will be May 6-7 at the Nashville Convention Center. Please get involved in your association by calling MNEA and volunteering to serve as a delegate.

## How About a Break at Fall Creek Falls?

If you are a licensed teacher making reservations for a personal stay (not a conference) at Fall Creek Falls State Park, you'll be glad to know that discounts are available to you as follows: (Nov.-March) 50%; (April-Oct.) 25%. There are certain deadlines that apply, so call for information (1-800-250-8610.)



It's time again!

## TEACHER NIGHT OUT!

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

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

### FUN

LINE DANCE COMPETITION

### FOOD

Hot Dogs, Wings, Baked Beans,  
Cole Slaw, Chips,  
Sno-Cones, Drinks...

### DOOR PRIZES

4 in 1 travel pack,  
Portable tailgate chair,  
Wampler "Lily in Pose" Sepia print,  
Dinners at Cracker Barrel,  
O'Charley's and Chop House  
any many, many more

The Richard Griffin Band!



**PHOTO ID REQUIRED AT THE GATE.**

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

## Federal Loan Forgiveness Program

Teachers who teach math, science or special education for five years in a Title I school may be eligible for up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness. The Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act triples the previous loan limits for eligible highly qualified math, science and special education teachers. The increased amount is available to teachers with no outstanding loan balances prior to 10/1/98, and who borrow eligible loans before 10/1/05. For information about if you qualify, call the US Dept. of Education at 1-800-433-7327 or go to <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/declletters/GEN0414.html>.

More details and up-to-date information at [www.mnea.com](http://www.mnea.com)