



# News & Views

◆ Billings Education Association ◆ 510 North 29th Street ◆ Billings, MT 59101 ◆ 1-406-248-9812 ◆

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## Educators honored

Montana State University-Billings was the setting when Eric Feaver, MEA-MFT president, and George White, Dean of the College of Education & Human Services, honored the 2001-02 and 2002-03 National Board certified teachers and candidates.

The following teachers from Billings were honored:

### 2001-2001 Certified

- ☼ Janet Allen
- ☼ Steven Gardiner
- ☼ Lynn McKinney

### 2002-2003 Candidates

- ☼ Carol Annin
- ☼ Kristeen Keup
- ☼ Carolyn Thayer

NBC candidates will be notified of their certification results in November.

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation strives to make a difference in the lives of teachers and the children they teach. Teachers interested in National Board Certification can contact Erik Burke at 1-800-398-0826 for more information. The MPTF also provides scholarships for teachers pursuing National Board Certification. Contributions are always welcome. Teachers may designate The MPTF as their charitable organization of choice on the United Way Giving Campaign form.

## 28th Annual Christmas Fair Sunday — Nov. 30, 2003

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Holiday Inn Trade Center  
5500 Midland Rd. Billings, MT

- ☼ Applications to reserve tables are available from your Building Rep or the BEA Office (248-9812), or go to [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org). Click the link to download the application.
- ☼ Only merchandise hand-crafted by applicant or immediate family allowed.
- ☼ Applications accepted until Nov. 14.
- ☼ Payment must accompany application.
- ☼ Table rental is \$35 each for BEA and MEA-MFT Members. \$70 for Non-Members.

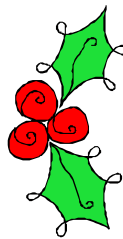
## Dundas & Pogue recognized as Outstanding Educators

Every year the Montana PTA Association recognizes educators that have been selected from their local PTA units as "Outstanding Educators." This year two teachers from Billings have made a difference to the students and parents from the units they represent. The 2002/03 Outstanding Educator Awards were presented to the following educators from your district.

**Shirley Dundas**, Boulder Elementary PTA  
**Sheri Pogue**, Big Sky Elementary PTA

*"Working together, we ensure every child, one voice."*

## Win Groceries! Win Cash! Here's Your Chance!



Get ready for the Billings Education Association annual Christmas Fair Raffle. The tickets may be purchased from BEA Building Representatives and sell for \$1 each or six tickets for \$5. All proceeds go to the BEA Scholarship Fund.

Each year the BEA Scholarship Committee selects at least three scholarship recipients. The BEA members' sons and daughters are eligible to apply for this scholarship. Anyone over 18 years of age can purchase raffle tickets. Friends, families, neighbors, and all friends of education may also purchase raffle tickets.

The raffle drawing will take place at the Holiday Inn Trade Center during the BEA Christmas Fair at 3:30 p.m. Participants need not be present to win.

### 1st Prize

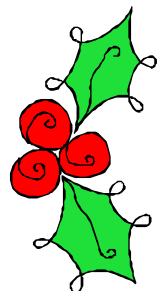
\$250 Grocery Gift Certificate plus  
\$100 CASH

### 2nd Prize

\$150 Grocery Gift Certificate

### 3rd Prize

\$75 Grocery Gift Certificate



**The President**



**BEA President**  
*Allan Audet*

## **Educators' Conference — Huge Success!**

**T**he MEA-MFT Educators' Conference was another great success with over 4,000 thousand educators from across the state in attendance. The success of the conference can be attributed to the hundreds of volunteers: those who helped work the event, Skyview students who diligently did what was asked of them, individuals that provided quality professional training and the numerous MEA-MFT staff who planned the conference impeccably.

Many of our teachers, both retired and active must also be thanked for volunteering their time. Two teachers, in particular, should be recognized for their willingness to co-chair the Educators' Conference. Julie Seedhouse and Barb Fettig did a fabulous job organizing the conference locally. Those in attendance can verify how smoothly everything flowed from the first day of setup to the 5 p.m. tear down on Friday. Let them know how much you appreciate the tremendous effort and sacrifice of time that they contributed to the MEA-MFT Educators' Conference and you.

It takes so many individuals to plan an event of this size so thanking everyone individually is overwhelming. Thank you,

especially, to all of you at **Skyview**: the custodial staff, (which was fantastic), classified staff, teachers and

administration. Thank you from the BEA for opening your building and providing the support that was needed. You are truly appreciated.



## **Grievance Update**

**D**uring the 2003 Summer School session, it was discovered that members of our bargaining unit were being paid at different rates of pay. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that this had been occurring for quite some time, and the BEA was unaware of it. A grievance was filed to bring resolution to the discrepancy of the pay issues. I met with the District to discuss a resolution and it was decided those individuals working the federally mandated special education programs in the summer should have received an extended school year contract (ESY).

According our Master Agreement, if teachers do receive an ESY or work in a program that is classified as such, they are to be paid their daily rate, not the Summer School rate. To resolve this grievance, it was agreed that teachers involved in the 2003 summer session will have their wages recalculated and receive a retro paycheck. It was also determined that teachers will be paid at their daily rate for future ESY contract work.

This is another example of the importance of having our members know and understand their contractual rights. I encourage you all, especially Building Representatives, to read through the Master Agreement periodically to refresh yourselves so that you can better represent your members.

***Working together we can  
make a difference!***



## A Record Year for Saturday Live 2003!

A glorious fall day meant great news for Billings area public school groups. At the 11th annual *Saturday Live*, 60 school groups raised \$10,000 more than in any previous year, netting at least \$66,000. An estimated 15,000 people had a wonderful day traversing the troll bridge, painting pumpkins, munching on tacos, listening to great student entertainment, and participating in over 150 additional activities.

Special thanks to all the School District 2 teachers who make this event happen and be so successful. Thank you for organizing your school groups, staying up half the night making cakes or pies, and giving up your Saturday to create a community event. School groups will use the money they raised to help their groups buy uniforms, update technology, start a language program, attend regional competitions, and more. On behalf of the Education Foundation, thank you. See you next year!



Anne Cole

Education Foundation Director

## Co-Chairs Fettig & Seedhouse say "Thanks!"

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all of the Billings MEA-MFT members who contributed to the great success of the *2003 MEA-MFT Educators' Conference*. Over 223 presenters, 551 sectionals, and 90 exhibitors from all over the country were able to provide valuable educational opportunities for the 2,591 attendees of the conference. Of course, the conference could not have been a success if not for the generous people of Skyview High School. Our steering committee worked tireless hours before, during, and after the conference, and our student volunteers impressed everyone with their enthusiasm and graciousness. We are also very grateful for the support and patience of our administrators and our coaches as we took over their building and disrupted their schedules.

To everyone involved in the conference, thank you for all that you do for education and for the city of Billings!

Julie Seedhouse

Barb Fettig

Co-Chairs

## IN THE NEWS

## Hang on to those receipts!

With school district budgets tight this year and more Montana teachers reaching into their own pockets for classroom supplies, the MEA-MFT reminds educators to "hang on" to their receipts for out-of-pocket expenses. Although the future of tax deductions is uncertain, the Internal Revenue Service reminds educators that classroom expenses may lower their 2003 taxes.

The deduction is available to eligible educators in public or private elementary or secondary schools. To be eligible, a person must work at least 900 hours during a school year as a teacher, instructor, counselor, principal, or aide.

Taxpayers may subtract up to \$250 of qualified expenses when figuring their adjusted gross income (AGI) for 2003. This deduction is available whether or not the taxpayer itemizes deductions on *Section A*.

The IRS suggests that educators keep records of qualifying expenses in a folder or envelope with a label such as "Educator Expenses Deduction," noting the date, amount and purpose of each purchase. This will help prevent a missed deduction at tax time.

This is the last year for this deduction. Last year's *Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act* put it in place for 2002 and 2003 only.

Montana's "Teacher of the Year" Alyson Mike, a science teacher at East Valley Middle School, says a tax deduction is necessary for teachers. Mike says, "I did a quick survey in our building and the average teacher has already spent anywhere from \$150 to \$300. I teach science and you need a lot of consumable materials which is above and beyond what schools can afford in their budget. There have been years where I've spent anywhere from \$1500 to \$2000." Mike adds, "With average teacher salaries in Montana among the lowest in the nation, a tax deduction is a way to recognize those who are dedicated to the profession."

The teacher benefit is set to expire unless Congress takes action on a bi-partisan bill that would extend the deduction and raise it to at least \$400. For more information on the teacher tax deduction, go to [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)

## United Way Giving Campaign underway

BEA Building Representatives have recently distributed *United Way* contribution forms. As teachers consider their donations to the *United Way*, they should keep in mind that all or part of their donations can be designated for the *BEA Fund for Needy Kids* or the *BEA Scholarship Fund* in the box on the form for specific agency.

Completed *United Way* forms should be returned to the school's BEA Building Representative by November 5.



## October/November 2003 Calendar

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Oct. 26  | <i>Daylight Saving Time Ends</i>           |
| Oct. 31  | <i>Halloween</i>                           |
| Nov. 4   | <i>Election Day</i>                        |
| Nov. 5   | <i>United Way forms to Building Reps</i>   |
| Nov. 5-7 | <i>K-6 Parent Teacher Conferences</i>      |
| Nov. 11  | <i>Veterans' Day</i>                       |
| Nov. 12  | <i>BEA Board of Directors</i>              |
| Nov. 14  | <i>Christmas Fair Application Deadline</i> |
| Nov. 18  | <i>Representative Council</i>              |
| Nov. 19  | <i>National ESP Day</i>                    |
| Nov. 24  | <i>Raffle Tickets Due</i>                  |
| Nov. 27  | <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>                    |
| Nov. 30  | <i>28th Annual Christmas Fair</i>          |

## Make candidates measure up for children & public education

### Strengthening Public Education:

**Increasing** funding for schools and colleges, opposing vouchers, privatization and tuition subsidies to private and religious schools, addressing the shortage of qualified teachers, and modernizing school facilities.

### Ensuring Children's Health / Safety

**Supporting** safe schools programs, expanding Head Start, and strengthening child care, health and nutrition programs.

### Maximizing Student Learning

**Reducing** class sizes, ensuring early childhood education, increasing funding for special education, and expanding after-school programs and college scholarships.

### Respecting School Employees

**Increasing** salaries, safeguarding pensions, and Social Security, including educators in decision making, and expanding funding for professional development.

## McCulloch announces 'Online License Renewal' for Educators

**L**inda McCulloch, state superintendent of public instruction, recently announced the start of a new web page which allows educators to renew their licenses online. Electronic renewal promises speedier service and allows credentials to be updated in the certification system immediately. Teachers, administrators, and specialists can renew their licenses by visiting the *OPI* Web page at [www.opi.state.mt.us/cert](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/cert)

A few items must be considered when renewing online:

- ✓ Educators may not renew until Jan. 1 of the year their license expires.
- ✓ Educators are responsible for maintaining official documentation verifying completion of the renewal activities submitted.
- ✓ Any renewal application may be subject to audit.
- ✓ Those persons selected for audit will be required to submit verification of meeting the renewal activities submitted. If an educator is unable to produce verification within 60 days from the date of the audit letter, the educator's license may be suspended or revoked by the Board of Public Education.
- ✓ If educators do not want to use the online renewal process, they can download the new, updated renewal application from the *OPI* Web page.
- ✓ *OPI* Educator License Contact: Margaret Bowles, [mbowles@state.mt.us](mailto:mbowles@state.mt.us), 444-2580



## New BEA Website!

**BEA WEBSITE:** [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org).

- Now you can download the *BEA News and Views* from our website.

# News & Views

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