

NEWS & VIEWS

BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Program sets Fundraiser

It was so much fun last year that the *BEA* is doing it again! On October 18, Diane Welhaven announced at Representative Council the next *BEA* Karen Cox Scholarship Raffle will begin in November. She will contact prize donors from last year and will also contact new sponsors. The prizes are beginning to pile up. A complete list will be available soon!



Raffle tickets go on sale from November 14 - December 16. The tickets are \$1 each or six tickets for \$5 and can be purchased from *BEA* Building Representatives and *BEA* Board members or at the *BEA* office. Winning tickets will be drawn at the *BEA* office on four consecutive Mondays, starting November 28. Each raffle ticket has multiple chances to win—first in the weekly drawings and then in the Grand Prize drawing on December 19. All proceeds go to the *BEA* Karen Cox Scholarship Fund.

MEA-MFT Pre-Retirement Workshop

MEA-MFT will host a Pre-Retirement Workshop in Billings on Wednesday, November 16. All certified and classified staff are invited to attend. Information on both the Teacher Retirement System (*TRS*) and the Public Employees Retirement System (*PERS*) will be presented by *TRS* & *PERS* staff.



The workshop begins at 4:10 p.m. in the Board Room of the Lincoln Center at 415 North 30th St. Information on *NEA* Long Term Care, Member Benefit programs, the Retired *MEA-MFT* program, Social Security benefits, and more will also be presented.

Refreshments will be provided by the Retired *MEA-MFT* at the break at 5:50 p.m. The workshop will resume at 6:10 p.m. with the *TRS* presentation in the Board Room. The *PERS* presentation will be given at the same time at the *BEA/MEA-MFT* office across the parking lot. Attend all portions of the workshop or just those of interest. Contact Shauna at 248-9812 or Pat at 248-9820 with questions.

A complete agenda follows on page 3 of the *News & Views*.

Third Annual BEA Blood Drive begins



At press time 18 people have signed up to give blood on November 8! The *UBS* Bloodmobile will be in the Lincoln Center parking lot on November 8 from noon to 5:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment time, go to www.bloodhero.com, enter

lincolneducation for the sponsor code or call Shauna at 248-9812. An appointment is not mandatory and walk-ins are always welcome. When you donate, tell *UBS* the name of your school so your staff can win a pizza lunch from Main Street Papa John's.

Cox Reception Held



Friends, colleagues, and family gathered at the *BEA* Office on Tuesday evening, October 12 to celebrate the memory of elementary teacher Karen Cox. In 2004 the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation created a grant program in Cox's name to help educators with costs for supplies, technology, or materials to benefit classroom education. These expenses are often covered by teachers personally as school funding resources are often unavailable.

Phil Cox, Karen's husband, was also recognized for the sizeable donation he recently made to expand the grant program. With these additional funds, a possible 10-15 number of grants at \$500 each could be awarded this year.

Applications for the Karen Cox Memorial Grants may be downloaded from the *BEA* web site, www.beabillings.org or at the *BEA* office. The deadline to apply is October 31. Donations for the Karen Cox Memorial Grant Program can be sent to:

Montana Professional Teaching Foundation
1232 East Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59601
Attention: Cathy Warner

Important Dates



October 31

Karen Cox Memorial
Grant Application Deadline

November 4

Montana Shares Pledges Due

November 8

3rd Annual *BEA* Blood Drive

November 14

Buy *BEA* Raffle tickets

November 16

MEA-MFT Pre-Retirement Workshop

November 23-27

Thanksgiving Break

November 28 - Dec. 19

Raffle Drawings on Mondays

What's Happening?



Allan Audet
BEA President



NOW LOADING . . .

Montana Schools E-Learning Consortium

E-learning in Montana Launched



On Monday, October 17, the Billings School Board voted to become part of the Montana Schools E-Learning Consortium, (*MSELC*). The 2005 Legislature passed two bills *SB224* and *SB359* that allow for offsite learning. Over

the next couple of months, teachers will hear more about this and learn what it will mean for educators and students in District #2.

MSELC was developed a year ago by the efforts of members of the *MTSBA*, *MREA*, and *MEA-MFT*. The goal of the organization is to provide E-Learning educational opportunities for students who live in rural and urban districts who have specific educational goals and needs. It will provide new educational opportunities for students such as those who desire to accelerate their graduation or those who require specific credits to graduate. Any student currently enrolled in District #2 can take the E-Learning classes at no cost. Students who are currently not enrolled in the District must first register in the district where they reside to be eligible to participate.

After students are registered, the District will be responsible to pay \$500 per



student, per class, to the Consortium for a year-long class or \$250 for a semester class. This cost is offset to the District because the District will be able to receive $\frac{1}{4}$ ANB per class.

The District also will receive funding from the Consortium of \$4,000 for classes of 15 or an additional \$200 per seat— up to a maximum class size of 20. These funds provide the salary for the instructors and will be bargained for locally. The Consortium also uses the money it receives from the Districts for the employment of an individual to maintain the operation and maintenance of the system.

All classes will be taught by teachers who have their Montana teacher certification. This ensures that classes meet accreditation standards. Any classes taught in School District #2 will be taught by bargaining unit members. The District and the Association will meet soon to discuss the details of Association members' compensation and other language items of concern. *MEA-MFT* and the Helena School District developed a sample version of a contract that can be used as a base line for new districts participating in *MSELC*.

Project manager Leanne West says, “*MSELC is the first E-Learning program designed to meet the unique needs of Montana's rural districts, where course offerings are slim, or certified teachers may not be available.*”

Mission Statement

The Montana Distance Learning Vision Statement implements a state-wide, non-profit, self-funded, member-governed distance education program designed for and by Montana's K-12 Public School Districts using properly licensed and endorsed educators to provide exemplary instructional services to students across the state utilizing the latest technology in a cost-effective delivery system.

- ✓ Through a new E-Learning opportunity launched this year, students in Geraldine can take German classes and teens in Frenchtown can take advanced physics and courses they may not have access to in their hometowns.
- ✓ Founded a year ago, the Montana Schools E-Learning Consortium (*MSELC*) will begin its first semester of classes in Montana next week. The organization aims to provide a diverse education for Montana students who live in isolated communities and provide students in larger districts the chance to make up missed classes or accelerate their path to graduation.
- ✓ While distance learning programs are not new in Montana, All courses are taught according to state standards by Montana certified teachers.
- ✓ *MSELC* is not offered to exclude other distance learning programs. One of the main differences between *MSELC* and other programs is that *MSELC* courses are free to students who are enrolled in participating districts.
- ✓ Some 45 school districts have joined the Consortium and more districts are connected every week.
- ✓ So far, 54 classes are offered through the *MSELC*, including 10 middle school courses and three elementary-level courses.
- ✓ The Consortium is supported by the Montana School Boards Association and the Montana Rural Education Association — organizations that lobbied for legislation that would make e-learning possible. (Information gathered from Helena Independent Record.)



MSELC Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1436
Helena, MT 59624
<http://www.mselc.org>





Improve Quality of Life by GIVING



It's time to wrap up the charitable giving pledges for Montana Shares. Thanks to all for helping and supporting Montana Shares and the 35 member groups that make up this partnership devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout the state. These groups are working on health and hunger; women, children, families; arts and culture; animal welfare; the environment; sustainable communities; social justice and human rights. They ARE making a difference in Billings and throughout Montana. Learn more about the member groups at the Montana Shares website (www.montanashares.org) where you can find links to each of them.

BEA Fund for Needy Kids and BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund can also be written in on the Montana Shares pledge forms. Montana Shares is about donor choice — the choices are many, the choice is yours. Just indicate your choices on the form.

Thank you for your support. Please send pledge forms to Shauna at the BEA office by November 4th. Checks (made payable to Montana Shares for any of your designations on your pledge form) may be mailed directly to Montana Shares at the address on the forms.

Questions? Call Montana Shares at 1-800-823-2625 or email shares@montanashares.org

MEA-MFT Pre-Retirement Workshop Agenda

Nov. 16, 2005 - Lincoln Center Board Room

4:10 p.m. Welcome!

-from local MEA-MFT Unions & the Retired MEA-MFT Program

4:15 p.m. MEA-MFT 2005 Legislative Agenda — School Finance Reform, PRO & K12 Statewide Health Insurance Program (K12-SHIP)

4:35 p.m. NEA Member Benefits — Personal Value for Your Union Membership
- Pam Wilson, NEA Member Benefits Program staff

4:45 p.m. NEA A+ Auto/Home Insurance Program

4:55 p.m. The Basics of Pre-Retirement Financial Planning
- Kent Althoff, NEA Valuebuilder

5:25 p.m. Why You Should Consider Long Term Care
- Gary Cathey, NEA LTC staff

5:50 p.m. Break: Hors d'oeuvres & Refreshments
- Provided by Retired MEA-MFT

6:10 p.m. Social Security in the 21st Century: It's Your Future
- Jack Leuchtman, SSA Staff

- 6:50 p.m.** a) Your Defined Benefit Pension: TRS Benefits & Procedures
- Janet Cooper, TRS staff
b) Your PERS Classified Employees Pension Program
- Rob Virts, PERS staff

8:00 p.m. FINISHED!



Know Your Master Agreement



SD2 Teachers with more than 10 years of service or less than 35 years of service will be paid a service credit when they retire or resign. For each year of employment prior to June 30, 1986, \$100 will be paid. For each year of employment after July 1, 1986, a credit equivalent to 2 1/2 days of the highest daily rate of actual service will be paid.

Upon leaving the District, teachers can cash out unused accumulated sick leave days at the rate of 1/4 of their current salary.

—Retirement Notification Deadlines—

SD2 Teachers can maximize their service credit and sick leave credit when they retire or resign just by keeping in mind this important date: **March 1**.

By notifying the District of your decision to retire or resign **before March 1**, teachers will receive an additional 5 percent of their service and sick leave credit.

On the other hand, giving notice **after April 1** will reduce the amount of service credit and sick leave credit by as much as 10 percent! So when planning to retire or resign, watch those dates!



— Severance Notification Deadlines —

- Notification before March 1: 105% *
 - Notification after March 1: 100% *
 - Notification after April 1: 95% *
 - Notification after the last day of school: 90% *
- * % of Service Credit & Sick Leave Credit to be received

See the *Article VII Compensation, Section 17 Service Credit & Section 18 Severance Notification and Article VIII Leaves of Absence, Section 1 Discretionary Leave, Subd. 13 of the Master Agreement* for exact contract language.

A message from NEA President Reg Weaver and NEA Executive Director John Wilson on the NCLB Lawsuit



The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law says the federal government must pay for the regulations it is imposing on the nation's public schools. But Washington lawmakers have created a \$27 billion shortfall that parents have had to cover with their tax money.

A diverse network of schools that are saying, "No more," teamed up with the NEA to file the first national lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education on April 20, 2005. With this lawsuit, local communities are asking the Bush administration to allow parents to spend tax dollars on their children's classrooms — not testing companies.

Brief update on Oct. 19 hearing: The federal government asked that the suit be dismissed on two grounds: (1) none of the plaintiffs have legal standing to bring the suit and, (2) NCLB Section 9527(a) which NEA claims prohibits unfunded mandates, does not.

- * The federal government's case was presented by a Justice Department attorney.
- * At the conclusion of the oral arguments the judge stated he intended to issue a written ruling on the motion to dismiss within the next three weeks.
- * If the judge rules against the motion to dismiss, the federal government cannot appeal, and the case would move into the merits of the NEA claim.
- * If the judge rules in favor of the motion, NEA and the other plaintiffs do have the right to appeal that ruling.



Membership Benefits Showcase

BEA Member = Bennies



BEA members planning a trip for the upcoming holidays can save money on car rentals, hotels and theme park tickets with discounts made possible by NEA and AFT.

Car Rentals: Alamo, Budget and National Car rental discounts can be accessed with the following reservation phone numbers and AFT discount codes:

Company	Alamo Car Rental	Budget Car Rental	National Car Rental
Phone	800/354-2322	800/455-2848	800/227-7368
AFT Discount Code	93643-BY (weekdays) 93643-A1 (weekends)	T544500	5130283



NEA also has discounts on car rentals at Alamo. Save up to 25 percent per day and check out additional savings such as \$20 Off, One Free Day, and One Free Upgrade. Just use your NEA member discount ID# 613575. Car rentals from Hertz are also discounted with this NEA discount code CDP#50655. To receive a

NEA/Hertz discount card or a NEA/Alamo discount card log on to <http://www.neamb.com/discount/carpge.jsp> and request item code 067.

Hotels: Candant hotels offer AFT members savings up to 20 percent and more off regular rates at thousands of participating locations throughout North America.

AFT members should call the hotel brand's toll-free number (listed below) in advance for reservations and to confirm their discount rate. Discounts are subject to availability. Make reservations early to guarantee the best discount. When making reservations, identify yourself as an AFT member and mention your AFT PLUS discount number to the operator: 20952.

Call to make reservations:

AmeriHost Inn 800/996-2087	Super 8 Motel 800/889-9706
Days Inn 800/268-2195	Travelodge 800/545-5545
Howard Johnson 800/769-0939	Wingate Inn 877/202-8814
Knights Inn 800/682-1071	Ramada 800/462-8035



For more discounts on union hotels in vacation destinations, visit the AFL-CIO Union Plus Web site for details.

Theme Parks: Save on admission to a variety of theme parks including Sea World, Busch Gardens and more. To order the discount admission coupons, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643 or complete the theme park package order form. (<http://www.aft.org/aftplus/travel/forms/index.htm>) Go to <http://www.neamb.com/> and <http://www.aft.org/aftplus/> for more details on these member benefits and much more.



November CALENDAR

October 31

Karen Cox Memorial Grant Application deadline

November 2- 4

Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences

November 8 & 9

High School/Middle School Early Out

November 8

3rd Annual BEA Blood Drive

November 9

BEA Board of Directors

November 15

Representative Council

November 16

MEA-MFT Pre-Retirement Workshop

November 23-27

Thanksgiving Break



Three Billings Teachers Earn NBC



THREE BILLINGS TEACHERS were among the Montana teachers honored at a ceremony for receiving National Board Certification last year. According to Erik Burke of the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation, **Julie Blakeslee**, a music teacher at Boulder and Meadowlark Elementary, **Janet Nickoloff**, a librarian at Riverside Middle School, and **Deanne Gemmill**, a math teacher at

West High, attended a lunch in Helena on October 24 hosted by Superintendent of Schools Linda McCulloch and Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger. McCulloch presented each of the teachers a \$3,000 stipend from the state.

In addition, the three Billings teachers will receive a \$2,000 yearly stipend for the 10-year National Board Certification, which the BEA has negotiated with School District #2. Congratulations to **Blakeslee, Nickoloff, and Gemmill!**

BEA President, ALLAN AUDET
1st Vice President, JEFF GREENFIELD
2nd Vice President, DIANE WELHAVEN
Secretary, JOAN SLEETH

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