

# NEWS & VIEWS

## BEA PAC endorses local candidates

Don Reed	HD 44
Dick Skewis	HD 47
Wanda Grinde	HD 48
Doug Harper	HD 46
Kendall Van Dyk	HD 49
Robyn Driscoll	HD 51
Gary Branae	HD 54
Bob Maxson	HD 55
Bobbie Larson	HD 57
Arlene Becker	HD 52
Ray Tracy	SD 23
Margie MacDonald	SD 25



YOUR VOTE COUNTS  
IT'S YOUR VOICE

## MEA-MFT COPE endorses state-wide candidates

JON TESTER:	U.S. Senate
MONICA LINDEEN:	U.S. House of Representatives
JOHN WARNER:	Montana Supreme Court Justice
JIM RICE:	Montana Supreme Court Justice

## Educators' Conference Huge Success!

The MEA-MFT Educators' Conference was a great success with 2,773 attendees and visitors such as Governor Schweitzer, Senator Max Baucus, U.S. Senatorial candidate Jon Tester and U.S. House candidate Monica Lindeen.



Pictured left to right:  
Julie Seedhouse, Max Baucus, Barb Fettig

The success of the conference can be attributed to the hundreds of volunteers who helped work the event from Skyview students to the individuals that provided quality professional trainings to the numerous MEA-MFT staff. For the

second time Julie Seedhouse and Barb Fettig, did an excellent job organizing the conference locally. Their commitment to this event is unparalleled and they deserve all the recognition they receive.

It takes so many individuals to plan an event of this size. Thank you to all at Skyview and Castle Rock, the custodial staffs, classified staff, teachers, retired teachers, registration volunteers and administrators. The BEA would like to thank all who made this event possible. You are truly appreciated.

## Math Teachers Awarded NEA Foundation Grant

Margaret Aukshun, David Snow, Tammy Erlenbusch, Jamie Nixdorf, and Jodi Hillberry were awarded a *Learning & Leadership Grant* from The NEA Foundation. The grant amount is \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study.



The West High math department will use the \$5000 award to implement a professional learning community for their math colleagues in their department to focus on formative assessment. The group examines how formative assessment informs instruction, develops

rich and deep questioning techniques with students, and promotes validity and reliability in assessment tools. Group teachers share student work and reflect on instruction with math teachers from the local elementary and middle schools.



The *Learning & Leadership Grants* support public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education for one of the following two purposes:

- 4 Grants to **individuals** fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research.
- 4 Grants to **groups** fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff new to an assignment.

Congratulations to the West High math department and best of luck and success with your project!

To learn more about the NEA Foundation's *Learning and Leadership Grant* program go to: [http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/Learning&Leadership\\_Guidelines.htm](http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/Learning&Leadership_Guidelines.htm)

## Watch for Raffle Tickets



Raffle ticket sales will begin in November to raise funds for the **BEA Karen Cox Scholarship**. Four weekly drawings will be held ending with the Grand Prize. Watch for flyers announcing the prizes and drawing dates. Keep your \$\$\$\$\$ handy to purchase tickets from your Building Representatives!



# A Message from the President



Allan Audet  
BEA President

**F**all is upon us and it is time for change. This November we have the ability to significantly change the course of education and our community. We have all heard a significant amount about constitutional initiatives **97, 98,** and **154** and the reasons to vote **NO** on them. The minimum



wage initiative, **151**, is the lone exception where we are encouraged to vote **YES!**

Many have questioned how the citizens of Billings can possibly support a **new baseball field** or a **safety levy** when our schools have suffered recently by failed mill levies. It is an individual decision about what you want your community to represent and offer to those that live here.

I, for one, believe we must begin to promote change in the community by supporting a wide array of new ideas and proposals that could have significant financial and more importantly social impact upon our community. It is time for the progressive groups seeking change in our community to work together and support one another. Many of the issues before us are not about **private vs. public** but rather what we all see as a need for a quality community for all the citizens of our city.



**As we go to the polls this November, one should be encouraged to consider supporting Cobb Field and the safety levy.** Each of these issues is directly related to what we stand for in the educational setting.

As educators, we promote positive extracurricular activities for students to participate in and attend. A new Cobb Field would provide participation for many student athletes at the high school and college levels. Attending baseball games in the summer offers a positive choice for students to spend their free time during their summer

vacation. One only has to attend a game on any warm summer evening to see the hundreds of students in attendance; they are enjoying themselves in conversation and cheering for their favorite team. I have witnessed the importance of Cobb field both as a parent of

a player and as a fan. I will support the levy for what it provides to this community.

The passage of the safety levy has allowed the city to have a School Resource Officer (**SRO**) in our middle and high school buildings. If the levy were to be revoked this election, schools could see their **SROs** leave the buildings because of the need for the city to assign them elsewhere. With the current emphasis on school safety, it would be disheartening to see this happen. I believe the **SROs** play a significant role in our schools and deter issues that could become serious safety threats. Large school events which are currently covered by officers and events such as our recent Educators' Conference, where the officers were present to help with traffic flow, could see a dramatic decrease in officer presence. **Vote for student safety, vote NO on the repeal of the Safety Levy!**



# It's An Interesting Year!

Despite the fraud, the initiatives are still on the ballot.  
Say NO to fraud, Vote NO on CI-97, CI-98 & I-154

It has been an interesting election year fraught with sensational advertisements and legal rulings. But very soon know the ballots will be counted and the winners proclaimed. Four ballot issues with potentially far-reaching impacts on Montana's education funding, government, economy, and judicial system, are in the forefront: **I-151** (*Raise Montana*), **I-154** (*eminent domain and land-use rules*), **CI-97** (*state spending limit*), and **CI-98** (*recall judges*). MEA-MFT Committee On Political Education (COPE) recommends voting **YES** for **I-151** to give minimum wage earners in Montana a much needed, long overdue, \$1 raise, <http://www.raisemontana.org>. However, COPE recommends voting **NO** for **CI-97, CI-98 and I-154**.



**CI-97** is a constitutional initiative that would restrict the state budget to a formula of population growth plus inflation. This initially sounds good but when put into practice in Colorado it devastated vital public services. Montana's

constitution already requires the state to balance the budget and prohibits overspending. <http://www.notinmontana.org>

**I-154** would take away traditional safeguards against irresponsible land development. These safeguards are rules Montana communities put in place to protect kids, water rights, clean water and property values. While claiming to reform "eminent domain," **I-154** would render local planning and zoning meaningless. These loopholes allow outside developers to do whatever they want, despite local efforts to protect homes and families. Oregon passed a similar law in 2004 and special interests have filed more than 2,500 lawsuits, for \$4 billion in claims. **I-154** will lead to endless lawsuits—with huge costs to taxpayers. <http://no154.org>



**CI-98** would make it easier to recall judges, maybe too easy. Montana statutes already provide for the recall of elected judges. Montana already has a constitutional provision for disciplining and removing judges. Montana judges must be elected to get into office or to continue in office. **CI-98**, however, goes beyond the recall of judges who are not



doing their jobs, and provides for petitions and recall elections of judges for any reason if voter dissatisfaction. **CI-98's** purpose is to threaten or punish judges for doing their jobs —making tough decisions in accordance with the Montana Constitution and statutes. The ability to recall judges could threaten an independent, impartial and honest. <http://www.noci98.org>

*Interestingly, **CI-97, CI-98, and I-154** have all been invalidated by Great Falls District Judge Dirk Sandefur. He ruled the thousands of petition signatures to get the initiatives on the ballots involved 'a pervasive pattern of fraud.' The ballots were printed with the three measures before Sandefur ruled they were invalid. Proponents of the three measures have appealed the decision to the Montana Supreme Court but a ruling has yet to be handed down. If the Sandefur ruling is overturned, the initiative votes on the ballots could be counted. Voters are strongly urged to mark their choices on these initiatives as if the votes will be counted.*



## Montana Shares improves the Quality of Life

**Montana Shares** is about donor choice —the choices are many and the choice is yours. **Montana Shares** is a partnership of 37 members devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout the state. They are working to protect and promote our human, animal, cultural and

natural resources.

The new members this year are: A.W.A.R.E. (working statewide), Bridger Clinic (serving a tri-county area from Bozeman), Cancer Family Network of Montana (formerly For One Another – serving families statewide), Cooperative Health Center (Helena and surrounding area), and the Great Burn Study Group (working in Western Montana wilderness areas).

The annual charitable giving campaign is going on now. Brochures and pledge forms for **Montana Shares** are available from the BEA Building Reps, at the BEA office and/or from **Montana Shares**. They are downloadable from a homepage link at <http://www.montanashares.org>

Donations to the **BEA Fund for Needy Kids** and **BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund** can be written in on the **Montana Shares** pledge forms.

Complete pledge forms no later than the end of November; the sooner, the better. Whether it's a one-time donation or a payroll deduction pledge, return the form to **Montana Shares**, PO Box 883, Helena, MT 59624 or to Shauna at BEA. To make a secure online contribution using your credit card, go to <http://www.montanashares.org>. For more information, contact Joy McGrath at **Montana Shares**, 1-800-823-2625, or email [joy@montanashares.org](mailto:joy@montanashares.org).



# Know Your Master Agreement

## multiple lane changes



New to the 2006/07 Master Agreement is the removal of language which limited a teacher to one lane change per contract year



Movement on the salary schedule is often described as a change in 'steps and lanes'. A step is movement (directionally down, numerically up) on the salary schedule based on experience. A teacher employed more than 90 consecutive workdays in the previous school year is eligible to one experience step.

Lateral movement on the salary schedule, called a lane change, accompanies completion of approved education credits. New to the 2006/07 Master Agreement is the removal of language which limited a teacher to one lane change per contract year.

Teachers are advised to submit proof of earned credits to the Human Resources Department as they are completed and to keep personal record of those credits. In those ill-advised cases where credits have been stockpiled (not turned in as earned) a teacher now has the ability to advance on the salary schedule without any further loss of career income.

**Article VII Compensation, Section 9. Salary Adjustment, Subd. 4. A teacher will be allowed a maximum of one approved 15 credit hour educational step-up per contract year. The lateral movement from BA+30 to MA degree shall be declared as one educational step-up if the teacher chooses to bypass the BA+45 on the salary schedule. This restriction on educational step-ups shall not apply to teachers on sabbatical leave or general leave. to move laterally on the salary schedule when they provide official transcripts and verification of credits that have been approved by the Executive Director of Human Resource Services.**

*(strike-out indicates deleted language, bold indicates new language)*

## BEA Members boosts Membership

Thanks to BEA Building Representatives and fellow members who recruited members in the recent BEA membership drive. The latest tally confirms 1,098 BEA members! That represents a membership percentage of 94.2%.

## Tester Fundraiser a Success



On October 16, County Commissioner Bill Kennedy and BEA president Allan Audet hosted a fundraiser at the BEA office for U.S. Senate candidate Jon Tester. On a cool, rainy evening, Tester was well received by a full house of supporters who enjoyed Kennedy's famous chili and his wife's delicious brownies.

Tester spoke to the crowd about the campaign, the job he will do in D.C. to represent Montana, and his appreciation for the support he has received in Billings. Thank you to those who attended and made contributions to *Support Jon Tester*.

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## November CALENDAR



- November 1-3 Parent Teacher Conferences
- November 7 **VOTE**
- November 8 BEA Board of Directors
- November 10 Veterans Day
- November 12-18 American Education Week
- November 13 Children's Book Week
- November 21 Representative Council
- November 22-24 Thanksgiving Vacation

## AFT offers free consultation / review

One of the most frequent requests at the BEA Office is for information about the **Attorney Referral Service**. BEA members in need of personal legal help are eligible to receive free or discounted legal services.



AFT offers free lawyer consultation and review. The program is designed to help with personal legal matters (not work-related issues). For each separate matter, members and their immediate family can receive:

- ✓ A free consultation of up to 30 minutes. This consultation may include a free simple document review.
- ✓ A 30% discount on most additional services, including hourly rates and flat fees.

The NEA Attorney Referral Program also provides legal advice on personal matters. The program provides two free 30-minute consultation sessions during each membership year (9/1 - 8/31). In addition, the program will discount 30% of an attorney's normal fee for the following services: **Wills & Estates, Real Estate, Domestic Relations, Consumer Protection and Traffic Violations**. The 30% discount does not apply to business dealings, bankruptcies, IRS audit defense, and criminal violations (other than traffic violations) in which financial liability exceeds \$50.

When contacting these attorneys, identify yourself as a NEA/AFT member calling for the **Attorney Referral Program**. The NEA participating attorneys in Billings are Jim Graves or Paul Toennis at *Grave & Toennis, 259-7795*. The AFT participating attorney is Russell Plath of *Halverson, Sheehy & Plath, 256-2000*. For more information, contact the NEA Office of Legal Services at 202-822-7080 or AFT at 888/993-8886 or visit online [www.unionplus.org/legal](http://www.unionplus.org/legal).



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Read the BEA News and Views on the website, [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org)