

# NEWS & VIEWS

## The Cat Turns 50



Ten years ago, *NEA's Read Across America* asked adults and kids to share a book together. Today *NEA's Read Across America Day* is more than a celebration of Dr. Seuss's birthday—it's a national celebration of reading. And, this year, there is even more cause for celebration . . . *The Cat in the Hat* turns 50!

Have your classroom join in the festivities on March 2, 2007 and celebrate reading and the 50th birthday of Dr. Seuss's first book, *The Cat in the Hat*. The *BEA* will provide Certificates of Participation and Bookmarks for the schools. Order forms and information about the availability of other resources will be sent out in January.

Start planning now. Go to <http://www.nea.org/readacross/index.html> for more information.



## Join the fight — Project 236.

*Random House Children's Books* and *Dr. Seuss Enterprises* have partnered with *First Book* to launch a national literacy initiative: Project 236. (Dr. Seuss used 236 words in writing *The Cat in the Hat*.)

Here's how you can help:

**Send a Birthday Card!** For every official *Cat in the Hat Birthday Card* received by mail or online between January 9, 2007 and May 1, 2007 at midnight *Random House Children's Books* will donate one book to *First Book* (up to 1,000,000 books). *Official Cat in the Hat Birthday Cards* can be found in the first printing of *The Cat in the Hat Party Edition* (on sale 1/9/2007), at participating retailers hosting an *NEA Read Across America Event*, or online at [www.catinthehat.com](http://www.catinthehat.com).

**Buy any Dr. Seuss Book!** *Random House Children's Books* will donate one book to *First Book* (up to 1,000,000 books) for any Seuss *Random House Children's Book* purchased between January 9, 2007 and May 1, 2007.

*First Book* is an international nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. Complete details can be found at [http://www.seussville.com/CITH\\_50th/rules.html](http://www.seussville.com/CITH_50th/rules.html) Follow all the rules so that every Birthday Card and Dr. Seuss book counts.



## BEA/Cox Scholarships Available

Eligible high school seniors may obtain applications for the *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship* in January. The *BEA* will send

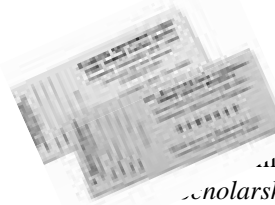
applications to the counselors' offices at West, Senior, Skyview and the Career Center and applications will be also be available from the *BEA* website, [www.beabillings.org/scholap07.pdf](http://www.beabillings.org/scholap07.pdf). The deadline for completed applications, accompanied by all required documentation, including three letters of reference, is Tuesday, March 6, 2007.

Each year the *BEA Scholarship Committee* selects at least three high school seniors. The scholarship recipients are notified by May and receive their monetary award in January of the following year. The amount of the monetary award varies each year according to current interest rates.

### Eligibility for the scholarship is limited to:

- ➔ Students whose parents has been *BEA* members for five continuous years
- ➔ Students whose parents have retired from the Billings Public Schools and were *BEA* members for five years prior to retirement
- ➔ Seniors who have attended a Billings Public High School for at least two years and whose parents are not eligible for *BEA* membership.

For more information about the *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Fund* email [shaunabea1@aol.com](mailto:shaunabea1@aol.com) or call 248-9812.



## Raffle— A Huge Success!

The prizes have all been awarded; the money counted. The *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Raffle* has been deemed a success! More than 4800 tickets were purchased and \$4,550 has been added to the scholarship fund. Part of the revenue came from direct donations and sales of *Herberger Community Days* coupon books but most of the revenue resulted from ticket sales.

The raffle is an important annual fundraising event held to augment the *BEA Karen Cox Scholarship* fund. Each year scholarships are awarded to at least three eligible high school seniors. Scholarship recipients receive the monetary award from the interest earned on the scholarship fund.

For more information regarding this year's prize donors and prize winners go to: [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org)



# From the BEA President

December Edition



Allan Audet  
BEA President

**O**ver the past several years the BEA has made significant progress in many areas. We have moved from the turmoil of the strike and have been able to negotiate in a collaborative model. That gives us the opportunity to work closely with the District to address both side's concerns.

## Achieved Bargained Issues

- ★ **Provided adequate raises**, ranging from 2.5% to 3.75%.
- ★ **Added language** to address the growing number of extra duties being assigned.
- ★ **Improved movement on the salary schedule** allowing more professional development and credits to be applied to lane changes.
- ★ **Applied greater flexibility for specialists** to apply their national certifications for step-up credit.
- ★ **Adjusted blackout days** so staff has greater opportunity to use Discretionary days.
- ★ **Provided better defined preparation time** for elementary teachers.
- ★ **Continued quality health insurance coverage** for all.

Make Your Concerns Heard—  
Complete negotiation surveys

As we move forward with negotiations this year, **it will be imperative for all members to provide input** to the negotiation team concerning what contractual modifications are necessary. Complete the negotiation surveys with realistic expectations and return them to the BEA office where they can be considered for this year's negotiation process.



## Goal: To Add More ER&D Classes

**ER&D, the locally controlled professional development program**, has been well received by members. The scientifically researched classes of *Foundations of Effective Teaching, Thinking Math, Reading Comprehension, and Managing Anti-Social Behavior* continue to be full and, in some cases, have grown beyond the Association building's capacity. Members have found the classes a fabulous way to move on the salary schedule and meet certification requirements. We continue to look for ways to build the program and look forward to adding classes and member trainers in the future.

Make college more affordable

**The BEA Karen Cox Scholarship fund raising** has generated significant dollars due to the generosity of our members and the community. It is an important component of the Association to **'give back'** to the students we impact on a daily basis. It is important for all of us to do whatever we can to support the students of our community, even after they leave our public schools. The long-term goal of the Scholarship Committee would be to increase the number of scholarships and make post secondary opportunities more affordable for the students of District #2.

## Wanted: NEA RA Delegates



Each summer the *BEA* sends a delegation to attend the annual meeting of National Education Association Representative Assembly (*NEA RA*). *RA* is *NEA*'s highest decision-making body with over 9,000 delegates in attendance. During this important event, delegates debate issues that impact American public

education, elect top officers, and set policy for the 2.7 million-member Association.

The 2007 *NEA RA* will be held in Philadelphia, PA from June 30 to July 5. The number of delegates is determined by each local's membership numbers. *BEA By-Laws* state the *BEA* President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, and Secretary will attend *NEA RA*. The rest of the *BEA* delegation is filled with an election of delegates in February. Expenses for the trip are covered by the Association.

For more information, contact the *BEA* office to obtain a self-nomination form. The nomination deadline is Friday, January 26, 2007 and the election is Tuesday, February 20, 2007.



## MEA-MFT Pre-Retirement Workshop Set

*MEA-MFT* will host its annual *Pre-Retirement Workshop* in Billings on Thursday, January 11, 2007. This year's workshop has been streamlined. It will start at 4:10 p.m. in the Lincoln Center's School Board Room and end at 6 p.m. Representatives from *Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)* and *Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)* will discuss benefits and procedures for retirement. *NEA Member Benefits* such as *Long Term Care*, *NEA Valuebuilder*, *A+ Auto/Home Insurance* and *Horace Mann* programs will be explained.

Snacks will be provided prior to the start of the meeting. All *BEA* and *BCEA* members are invited and are encouraged to bring their spouses. The *PERS* portion of the workshop will be held at the *BEA* office at 4:45 p.m.



*Is retirement is in your future?  
Get your Ducks in a Row!*

## Know Your Master Agreement

- Attend the January 11<sup>th</sup> pre-retirement workshop and hear critical information directly from *TRS* representatives.
- Contact the Human Resources office 247-3872 and have Joanie calculate your severance package and estimate your *TRS* benefit. *See Reference Article VII, Section 17.*
- Notify the District of your intent to retire by March 1 to receive 105% of service credit and sick leave. *See Reference Article VII, Section 18.*
- Contact Human Resources to sign *Irrevocable Election Form 90* days prior to your last work day to ensure your severance is tax deferred.

## Severance Notification Deadlines

Teachers can maximize their service credit and sick leave credit by notifying the District of their intention to retire or resign before March 1. An additional 5% will be calculated. Conversely, service credit and sick leave credit will be reduced if notification is given after March 31. See the notification dates below.



Notification before March 1	= 105%
Notification after March 1	= 100%
Notification after April 1	= 95%
Notification after the last day of school	= 90%

## READY FOR SCIENCE EXPO 2007?



In 2005, Billings Clinic Research Center Science Expo brought NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to Billings with its amazing *Mission to Mars Exhibit!* In 2006, Dr. Mary Schwietzer presented her new discovery of soft tissue found in dinosaur fossils, along with the Malta Dinosaur Trail Museum's unveiling of their new dinosaur!

The 2007 Billings Clinic Research Center Science Expo will take place on March 23 & 24. Students (grades 1-12) are encouraged to enter. Apply at: [www.billingsclinic.com/research/scienceexpo](http://www.billingsclinic.com/research/scienceexpo)  
Deadlines for entries are:

### High School Entries:

All paperwork must be submitted by January 26, 2007

### Elementary and Middle School Entries:

All paperwork must be submitted by February 9, 2007

For more information contact **Lesli Gould at 406-247-6456** or e-mail her at [lgould@billingsclinic.org](mailto:lgould@billingsclinic.org)



There's still time . . .

## Register for ER&D

- Managing Anti-Social Behavior - Course #PDAWN07-200
- Reading Comprehension for Grades K-8 - Course #PDAWN07-201
- Thinking Math I for Grades K-8 - Course #PDAWN07-202
- Foundations of Effective Teaching I - Course #PDAWN07-203

*AFT's Educational Research and Dissemination* training classes are taught by trained *BEA* members. In addition to learning solid, research-based techniques and strategies, Step-up credit, *OPI* credit, or College/Graduate credit is possible. Call *Community Education* in the Lincoln Center at 247-3700 to register. For more information, go to [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org) Class sizes are limited!

Did you throw your MEA-MFT card away?

## MEMBER BENEFITS

*New MEA-MFT Membership Card*

At the beginning of the school year MEA-MFT mailed new membership cards to every member in the state. Did you get yours? Some thought these cards were unsolicited credit cards and

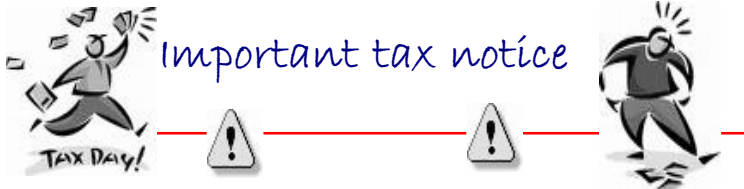


discarded them. This is a membership card which not only identifies you as a member of the BEA, MEA-MFT, NEA and AFT but gives access to a variety of special member-only benefits.

With the number on the back of your card and internet access you'll find a bevy of merchants, local, national, and online, waiting to give you discounts. Go to [www.mea-mft.org](http://www.mea-mft.org), click on the membership card on the webpage, enter the membership # on the back of your card into the second box, and click GO. A good place to start is to click on **MEA-MFT SAVINGS** on the left column. Select a category to see what discounts are available. Fine tune your search by entering your zip code and nearby merchants are displayed.

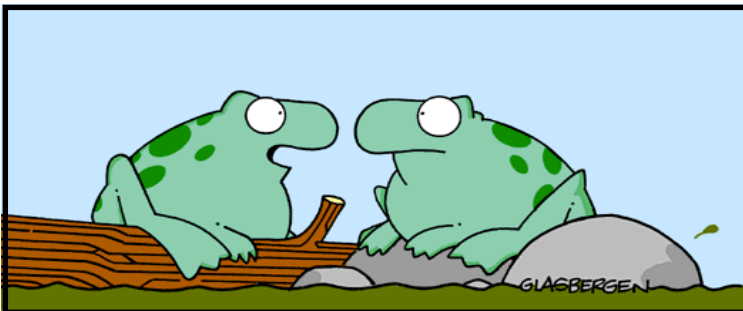
See how much you can save with your BEA membership. If you did not receive your membership card, request another. Contact Neva Passage, [npassage@mea-mft.org](mailto:npassage@mea-mft.org).

A host of motel, car rental, restaurant, cruise, vacation package, theme park, sporting event discounts are available. Save on coffee or video rentals at Mountain Mudd or Movie Gallery. Fix your car at Maaco, Firestone, and Midas and earn discounts at Target, Coldwater Creek, Linens'n'Things.



**D**on't forget, you can deduct your membership dues from your taxes, but **ONLY** if you itemize deductions and if your dues, plus other miscellaneous deductions, add up to at least 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.

The portion of your MEA-MFT dues that goes towards legislative activity is NOT deductible. For 2006, the deductible amount is 93 percent of your MEA-MFT dues, all of your local dues, and all of your national dues.



**"Looks aren't everything. It's what's inside you that really matters. A biology teacher told me that."**

December 2006 Edition

## Dec./ Jan.

2006-07

### Calendar

# HOLIDAY

Treats



**Dec. 24 - Jan. 1**  
**January 6**  
**January 10**  
**January 11**  
**January 16**  
**January 26**  
**Deadline**

**Winter Break**  
**Bargaining Conference**  
**BEA Board of Directors**  
**Pre-Retirement Workshop**  
**Representative Council**  
**NEA RA Delegate Nomination**

## 2007 Math & Science Award

### Nominees sought

**The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)** are the nation's highest honors for math and science teachers. The awards recognize qualified K-12 teachers for their contributions in the classroom and profession.

Since 1983, more than 3,700 teachers have been recognized. Nominate a great teacher **NOW** to join this prestigious network of professionals.

Awardees will receive:

- ★ A special citation signed by the president of the United States
- ★ A \$10,000 National Science Foundation grant
- ★ A paid trip to Washington DC for two to attend special recognition events

**Teachers must meet these requirements:**

- ★ Teach grades 7-12 mathematics and/or science classrooms
- ★ Have at least five years experience teaching 7-12 math and/or science
- ★ Teach at least halftime during the school year, or grades 7-8 in self-contained classroom
- ★ Work as a full-time employee of the school district and not be a past recipient of the *Presidential Award*

**The application deadline is May 1, 2007. The submission process requires the teacher be nominated and they must apply. Forms are available at <http://www.paemst.org> or from:**



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 Montana Professional Teaching Foundation  
 1232 East Sixth Avenue  
 Helena, MT 59601  
 1.800.398.0826, or [eburke@mea-mft.org](mailto:eburke@mea-mft.org)

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