

# NEWS & VIEWS

*Teachers, volunteers, aides, secretaries, principals*  
**Nominate that special person**

It's that time of the year, again. The banquet date has been set, April 25, 2006. Now all that is needed are the honorees!

Each year **BEA members** have an opportunity to nominate deserving individuals in five award categories:

- ✿ **Teacher of the Year**
- ✿ **Teacher in the Community**
- ✿ **Friend of Education**
- ✿ **Exemplary Administrator**
- ✿ **Exemplary Associate**



The *BEA* Awards Committee has the daunting task of selecting winners from the submitted nominations. The award winners are honored at the annual Educator Appreciation Awards Banquet. This banquet also honors Golden Apple recipients, School District 2 retirees, and 25-year employees.

Criteria for each award category is listed on the nomination form which has been distributed by the *BEA* Building Representatives at each school and can also be printed from the *BEA* web site, [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org). The deadline for members to submit nominations is March 20, 2006.

## Did You Know?

The *BEA* Awards program and the Golden Apple Awards program are often confused.

*Golden Apple* Awards is a separate program. The *Golden Apple* Awards program is community-based. Anyone from the community can nominate teachers and specialists from the Greater Billings Area for the five awards given by the *Golden Apple* Committee. Nomination forms for the *Golden Apple* are available at all schools, Lincoln Center, the District web site, [www.billings.k12.mt.us](http://www.billings.k12.mt.us). Forms will also be published in the *Billings Gazette*.

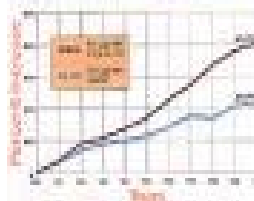


## NEA RA Delegates Elected



On February 21, *BEA* members elected two delegates to attend the 2006 *NEA* Representative Assembly in July. **Barb Fettig** and **Karen Tanner**, along with ex-officio delegates from the *BEA* Board of Directors, Joan Sleeth and Diane Welhaven, will join over 9,000 delegates from across the nation in Orlando, Florida. *BEA* members Jeff Greenfield and Allan Audet will also attend *NEA RA* as delegates for *MEA-MFT*.

### Teachers salaries lagging behind



## District 2 Contract Negotiations Begin

The current Master Agreement between School District 2 and the Billings Education

Association expires June 30, 2006. The *BEA* Negotiation team met with the District team on February 6 to discuss the style of bargaining.

It was decided that bargaining will follow the same format as was used to negotiate the current three-year contract.

It was agreed the bargaining would take place over a three-day period and will encompass:

- 5 language proposals allowed from each side
- Complete package must be agreed upon
- Meeting will take place off site
- Caucusing will take place in the bargaining room
- Joint press statements will be issued at the conclusion of the bargaining day

### Bargaining Dates:

- March 1 - Exchange of Proposals**
- March 13-15 - Negotiation Days**

Both parties agree that, if an agreement is not reached at the conclusion of the three-day bargaining session, they will start the process again. If the process starts again, all issues are back on the table to be negotiated.



## Applications now available for 2006 **BEA /Cox Scholarships Awarded**



Last month scholarship funds were sent to the 2005 scholarship recipients. **Cara Auch, Kevin Klaboe, and Nathan Wahl** each received \$561 for their academic pursuits during their first year of college.

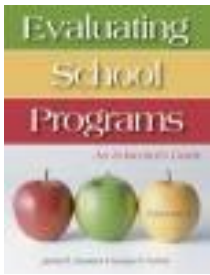
Each May at least three recipients are selected and scholarship funds are awarded

the following January.

High school seniors can apply for the 2006 *BEA* Karen Cox Scholarship now. The deadline for completed applications accompanied by all required documentation is March 7, 2006.

Scholarship applications are available at the counselors' offices at Senior High, West High, Skyview High and the Career Center and on the *BEA* web site, [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org).





# Lewis & Clark Middle School MAKES THE GRADE!



On January 26, 2006, Lewis and Clark Middle School was descended upon by 20 to 25 parents, community members, administrators, school board members, and teachers for their External Review. The goal of the Review Team was to look in from the outside and provide a comprehensive evaluation of the overall operation, educational delivery models, facilities and any relevant factors associated with providing quality education to students.



Our review committee members then met with one of the teacher teams named the Wolverines, in a room that is set aside for the teams to meet with parents, hold IEP meetings or other activities. Again, the facilities have the space to make the environment very comfortable and usable. The teachers were very open and described how they work together to support the students needs. The teaming time is used to discuss students and develop inter-curricular activities such as writing across the curriculum.

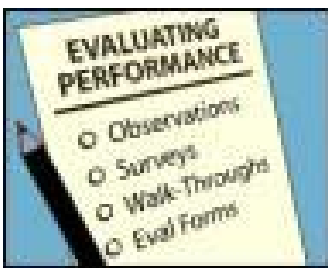
Upon arrival at 7:30 a.m. it became very apparent as one walked through the front doors that the custodial staff led by Steve Ketterling was very proud of their building. The floors sparkled as if just recently having been waxed, the walls, lockers, and classrooms were immaculate. It was obvious the students appreciated the environment as no abuse or vandalism was visible.

*“Lewis and Clark staff and administration, Thank you for the very positive experience. You should be very proud of what you are providing to the students at Lewis and Clark.”*



From this activity we moved on to actually observing classrooms where we saw teachers and students actively engaged in learning. Many on the committee who had not been in a classroom for some time were very

Our morning started with friendly greetings from the Lewis and Clark staff and an enjoyable presentation of the schools goals from Principal Steve Pomeroy and School Counselor Sara Neff in the well lit and organized library of Lewis and Clark.



Those in attendance were divided into small groups and led on a tour of the facilities by very polite and courteous students. Being the beginning of the day we were able to observe the arriving students and how they begin their day. Teachers and staff were very visible in the hallways and at all doors greeting the student as they arrived. The students were quiet, well mannered, and seemed at ease as they moved to their home rooms to prepare for the day ahead. The wide and airy hallways allowed easy movement for all as students were dismissed to their first class by the clock, not the bell, which added to the relaxed environment.

impressed with the lessons that were being taught and at how involved the students were with whatever activity was occurring.

We finished the day by coming together to discuss what we had observed and give feedback to the staff and administration. When you consider twenty or so individuals spending a full day at a school observing and looking at all aspects of the school, one would assume there would be something observed in need of improvement or change. The suggestions made by the Review Team were so minor they are not worth mentioning. In the Review Team’s view the staff and administration at Lewis and Clark are doing an exemplary job of providing quality educational experiences to the students they serve, in a building that is exceptional.



Most restrictive budget cap in nation

## TABOR/SOS Initiative

*Just Say No. Don't sign.*



My Voice.  
My Vote.

A ballot initiative called “Stop Overspending” (SOS) has been filed in Montana and it could severely restrict public services. The initiative is modeled after the so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) enacted in Colorado in 1992 and is the most restrictive budget cap in the nation. Coloradans voted to suspend TABOR in November 2005 because it devastated essential public services and the state budget. Republican, Democrat, and Colorado business

leaders alike led the effort for a five-year TABOR time-out. California voters also defeated a TABOR-like initiative in November 2005.

According to the National Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, TABOR has had the following impacts in Colorado:

- ✔ Crime prevention deteriorated as parole officer caseloads grew to almost double the national average.
- ✔ Employment dropped (-3%) in Colorado while it grew (+4%) in other mountain states.
- ✔ The percentage of low-income children lacking health insurance is now the worst in the country.
- ✔ Education quality in K-12 schools and higher education has dropped dramatically.
- ✔ The state's roads and highways have deteriorated.

Montana's SOS initiative is modeled closely after Colorado's TABOR but backers do not want it to be identified with TABOR, so they are calling it Stop Overspending (SOS). MEA-MFT is calling SOS the 'Sink Our State' initiative and is working to develop a large coalition of Montana groups and individuals to defeat it.



The best way to defeat it is to refuse to sign the petition that would put it on the ballot. Montanans should take a lesson from Colorado where TABOR strangled economic growth, education, health care, and transportation.

Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer has been a vocal opponent of any attempt to enact a TABOR-like initiative in Montana. Like Colorado's TABOR, Montana's SOS amends the state constitution by imposing a rigid formula to limit state government spending. The formula restricts spending by inflation plus population growth.

The Montana state attorney general's office must now approve the SOS initiative language. Initiative backers will then have until June 23 to gather enough signatures to get it on Montana's November ballot.

## Montana Workers Need Better Wages



Here's a ballot initiative to support. “Raise Montana” is an effort to increase Montana's minimum wage by \$1 an hour. This ballot measure (I-151) will also provide annual cost of living adjustments. The current minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour has not changed since it was set at that level by Congress in 1997.

Montana ranks 50th in the nation in average annual wage and first in the percentage of working people who hold at least three jobs to make ends meet. A full-time worker, paid \$5.15 an hour, (current minimum wage) brings home \$10,000 a year—well under the poverty line. Raising the minimum wage will directly impact over 25,000 Montanans and pour tens of millions of dollars into the state's small business economy.



Seventeen other states have already raised their minimum wage rates. It is time for Montanans to get a raise. Surveys show strong support for a minimum wage increase in Montana, with three-fourths of Montanans

supporting a \$1.00 increase in Montana's minimum wage.

To get this important initiative on the November 2006 ballot, 22,308 signatures from registered voters state-wide are required by April 1, 2006. To find a petition to sign or to register to vote, contact your Building Representative or the BEA Office at 248-9812.

## Know Your Master Agreement Stipend Positions



Stipend positions are long-term extracurricular assignments for activities such as coaching sports, cheerleading/majorettes, drama plays, debate team, band/orchestra/chorus, high school annuals or newspapers and more.

The BEA Master Agreement states, “Teaching staff will be given priority for extra pay positions. When qualified volunteers are not available, positions may be filled with non-staff members.”

Compensation for each long term extracurricular assignment has been negotiated and Appendix D in the Master Agreement lists the amounts. Teachers accepting stipend positions will receive a contract separate from the regular teaching contract.

A stipend position may be shared by two or more teachers with approval by the administration. The stipend will be split in a way agreed upon by the teachers sharing the position.

(See Article VII, Section 15 of the Master Agreement to see complete contract language.)





## February / March

- Feb. 28 – Retirement Notification Deadline for 105% Severance
- March 2 – *Read Across America*
- March 7 – BEA Karen Cox Scholarship Application Deadline
- March 8 – BEA Board of Directors
- March 17 - Saint Patrick's Day
- March 20 – BEA Awards Nomination Deadline
- March 21 – BEA Representative Council
- March 23 - Little Representative Assembly
- March 30 - MEA-MFT Board of Directors - Missoula
- March 31-April 1 - MEA-MFT Representative Assembly - Missoula



## NEWS

**Katie Hall**, an English teacher at Senior High, traveled to Tokyo in November as a participant in the Japan Fullbright Memorial Fund. She was selected from a pool of more than 2,500 applicants by a panel of educators to earn this honor. Four Billings teachers have been named state finalists for the 2005 presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the nation's highest honor for K-12 teaching, in these fields: **Jenny Combs**, a mathematics teacher at Senior High-Freshman Academy; **Shirley Greene**, a science teacher at Lewis and Clark Middle School; **Jacqueline McDonald**, a mathematics teacher at Senior High; and **Tom Stahley**, a science teacher at Skyview.



### — 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



## Classifieds

**NEED your house interior repainted?**

*Call for that exterior job too!*

**Big or Small**—Dave Barnett & Mike Cantrell can do the job! Call 656-7767 or 628-7122.



## Member Benefits Showcase



### BEA Member = Bennies AFT Scholarships and Grants Available

Membership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) makes members and their dependents eligible for the Robert G. Porter Scholars Program. This program offers four 4-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships to AFT members' dependents and offers 10 one-time \$1,000 grants to AFT members to assist with their continuing education.

Robert G. Porter was a dedicated union activist from the time he joined his first AFT local in East St. Louis, Ill., until his death in 1991. For nearly four decades, the late AFT secretary-treasurer gave his vision and experience to the American Federation of Teachers.

A mix of national AFT contributions and voluntary contributions from AFT affiliates, members and friends make the scholars program possible for two purposes: to encourage members in good standing to learn more about labor or further their own career, and to support members' dependents who wish to pursue a career in labor, education, health care or government service.

All students must submit a well-researched essay as part of the application. This year the topic is "Child Labor: A Global Shame." Excellent resources can be found on this subject at the American Labor Studies Center Web site ([www.labor-studies.org](http://www.labor-studies.org)), the AFL-CIO site ([www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org)), as well as the AFT Web site ([www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)) under the "AFT at Work in the World" link toward the bottom of the page.

Applications for the 2006 Robert G. Porter scholarships and grants are now available. See the sites listed below to download an application for the scholarship or the grant. Completed applications *must* be postmarked by March 31, 2006.



### Four-year \$8,000 Postsecondary Scholarship

- Must be an AFT member's dependent
- Graduate as a high school senior
- Pursue a career in labor, education, health care or government service
- Parent or guardian must be an AFT member for at least one year
- Scholarship application: [http://www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships/downloads/scholars\\_app\\_4year.pdf](http://www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships/downloads/scholars_app_4year.pdf)

### One-time \$1,000 Grant

- Must be an AFT member in good standing for at least one year
- Pursue courses in labor relations or courses in your field of work.
- No full- or part-time AFT staff, state or local, may apply.
- Grant application: [http://www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships/downloads/scholars\\_app\\_onetime.pdf](http://www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships/downloads/scholars_app_onetime.pdf)

For more information on the web about AFT's scholarships and grants visit [www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships](http://www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships).

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

News & Views  
Marilynn Sexton



Official Publication  
 Billings Education Association  
 510 North 29th  
 Billings, MT 59101  
 248-9812

Download  
 BEA News and Views  
 from website [www.beabillings.org](http://www.beabillings.org)