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## *President's Newsletter      February 2008*

February often brings a glimpse of love and romance on Valentine's Day along with the encouraging thought that the worst of a Michigan winter is usually behind us. One cannot help but anticipate the upcoming mid-winter break later this month especially if a warm climate cruise or a trip to snow country is in the works. Many wonder what the future will bring as greater control over local calendar planning becomes a reality. Will there really be another week-long break as has been the practice in Troy for so many years? As we look to the future, what else comes to mind –challenge, change, compounded curriculum, county control? Member involvement in the Association and participation in activities such as PAC (read below) will help to ensure your voice is heard on these and other issues as we move into the future. What new factors will be present to affect your teaching career five years from now? Will the art and love of teaching still be part of your repertoire or will it be simply a glimpse of a past era in education. Deal or no deal; the choice is yours!

*Roberta Masters*

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**Teacher of the Year** The TEA committee for "*Outstanding Teacher of the Year 2008*", met on January 29th to select this year's winners for each level and the District finalist. An official announcement will be made later in February and a complete list of nominees will appear in the March issue of the President's newsletter. Congratulations to those members of the teaching unit who were nominated by students, parents and/or colleagues! The difficult task of selecting the finalists was completed by committee members: **Marilyn Papandrea**- Wass, **Keith Dempsey**-Costello/Troy Union, **Lisa Lopez**-Troy High School, **Sharon Brennan**-Larson Middle School, **Roberta Masters**- SODA Office and TEA Committee Chair/PR Trustee, **Betsy Murphy** – Hamilton. Thanks are extended to all.

**Medications:** Once again, TEA members are reminded that it is **NOT** the role of teachers to administer any medications to students. Should a medical emergency arise where common sense indicates the safety and well-being of the student is in question, several steps are recommended to ensure proper care for the child: 1.) **Call 9-1-1**  
2.) **Notify the building administrator immediately** of the situation 3.) Allow **professionally trained medical personnel** the opportunity to properly determine and address the necessary emergency care of the student. These steps will help to ensure the best care for the student and remove the issues of liability from the shoulders of faculty, staff and the school district. This notice includes current medications and any future plans for staff training on new medications.

**Retirement Notification:** Congratulations to those members eligible to consider retirement at the **end of the school year**. Just a reminder: according to Article 28.5 on page 54, "Teachers retiring or resigning prior to the start of the next school year must give **notice by March 30<sup>th</sup>** (90 days prior to the end of the preceding school year)." Severance payout (Article 28.1 & 28.2) are based on this proper notification. Contact Roberta if you have any questions.

**Spring conferences:** The 2008 spring session for Parent/Teacher Conferences is scheduled on the afternoon and evening of Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. Often members ask how many conferences must be held. **Article 6.2.H (page 13)**

addresses the schedule when conferences are to be held but not a specific number of conferences. However, it has been past practice that elementary teachers fill thirteen (13) slots in the schedule. As professionals, teachers are to use discretion as to how the slots are reserved while keeping in mind the value that such an opportunity for open communication presents. Parents may be asked to meet for more than the standard 20 minute session in situations where a child's progress generates concern and the need for the additional time to help ensure successful student achievement. Your student data, knowledge of the student's behavioral and academic work, and other pertinent information should serve as support for decisions made regarding the scheduling of conferences.

**PAC Drive 2007-08 Or Apathy:** Which do you choose? **Do you like your MESSA insurance** which is effectively protecting you and your family against devastating financial costs? The personal value one places on medical insurance coverage is directly proportionate to the importance placed on the PAC (Political Action Committee) campaign! Who among us TEA members has recognized this direct connection and contributed his/her 2008 PAC donation? Which schools will meet the challenge to achieve 70% or greater participation? Have you taken action against the war on apathy when it comes to having the collective voice of educators heard in Lansing through lobbying efforts funded by PAC dollars? Sara Ritter (Boulan Middle School) and Kaity O'Riordan (Hamilton Elementary) have spent hours preparing materials to encourage your participation. ***Please give generously to support lobbying efforts that impact the future of medical health care for public school employees in Michigan. Give today and give often – don't let apathy win!***

**Bargaining Process Update** The TEA Bargaining Team continues work on developing a member survey. The tentative date for access to the survey is the week of February 25<sup>th</sup>. Information will be forthcoming as the process moves forward. The team is anticipating that the survey will be an electronic version which each member can access at his/her convenience from a home computer. Further communications through your TEA Building Representative will keep you posted on this activity. Please be sure to make your voice heard by actively participating in this important step to determine the priorities and issues for this round of negotiations. The TEA Crisis Team is also working on coordinating subcommittees/chairs and communications. Please step up with your assistance in this endeavor which is closely related to the negotiations of a successor agreement.

**Last reminder: MEA Scholarship 2007-08 Application:** This is a final reminder for scholarship opportunities for your senior who will be graduating from a public school in 2008. This MEA scholarship has been offered since 1997 and has awarded over \$175,000 to student scholarship recipients. It is supported through local association donations and fund raising efforts. Last year 17 public high school students and five college students were awarded scholarships which totaled \$25,000. Contact your child's high school counseling office or download an application from **MyMEA.org** under conferences and announcements. Applications must be postmarked by **FEBRUARY 8, 2008**.

**Summer Address Information:** It is important that the Association have summer contact information for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to updates on the bargaining/crisis status since the current collective bargaining agreement expires on August 14, 2008. Members are asked to log on to [www.iammea.org/tea](http://www.iammea.org/tea) and register updated information for the file. **Go to the "click here to submit your summer contact information" button.**

#### **February at a Glance**

February 05, 2008	TEA Executive Board @ Wass Elementary-4:00 p.m.
February 7-9, 2008	MEA Bargaining & PR Conference-Detroit
February 12, 2008	TEA Representative Assembly @ Bemis Elementary-4:15 p.m.
February 13, 2008	TEA Bargaining Team meeting @ SODA Office – noon
February 18-22, 2008	Mid Winter Break; no school students and faculty
February 25, 2008	School resumes for students and teaching staff
February 27, 2008	Bylaws Review Process continued with TEA Exec Board @ SODA Office- noon
February 25-29, 2008	TEA tentative survey dates

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