



30701 Barrington Avenue • Suite 125 • Madison Heights, Michigan 48071 • 248/585-3723

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*President:* ROBERTA MASTERS      *Vice President:* JOE MOCERI  
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## *President's Newsletter      March 2008*

Congratulations to our 2007-08 nominees for Outstanding Teacher of the Year! We are proud to continue the tradition which recognizes the talent and dedication of our members. These teachers nominated by parents, students, former students, and colleagues have been distinguished for the impact they have on students every day. Not only do they provide the knowledge, skill and talent to help students succeed but in the process inspire their students to dream and then show them how to reach those dreams. It helps to remind all of us just how deeply we touch the students' lives everyday through what we do best . . . TEACH! We send our best wishes to these colleagues as they continue their efforts in the classroom as great educators in Troy.      *Roberta Masters*

**Roberta Masters (work) 248.585.3723 (home office) 248.828.2812 Email: [teaprez@gmail.com](mailto:teaprez@gmail.com)**

**Teacher of the Year Finalists** We are proud to announce the following teachers as representatives for consideration to Oakland Schools for the county awards program at each level:

Gayle Spiteri-Bemis Elementary- District finalist & car winner  
Mark Martin-Boulan Middle School  
Kitty Schmidt-Athens High School

In addition, we extend our sincerest congratulations to Honor Roll nominees: **Scott Binford- Wattles, Mary Alice Fairweather- Bemis, Robin Gillis- Martell, Kristina Moutrie- Schroeder, Sandy Rasch- Martell, Suzanne Siegel- Barnard, Amy Uebbing- Troy Union, and Kelly Forshey- Troy High School.** All nominees will be honored at a dinner and the March 4<sup>th</sup> Troy School Board meeting at the Services Building beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Thanks are extended to the TEA Selection Committee chaired by **Betsy Murphy- Hamilton** and members: **Marilyn Papandrea- Wass, Keith Dempsey- Costello & Troy Union, Sharon Brennan- Larson Middle School, Lisa Lopez-Troy High, and Roberta Masters- SODA Office.**

**Bargaining Terms:** Each month the President's Newsletter will highlight some of the lingo or language used throughout the bargaining process. "T.A." represents the term tentative agreement. A "TA" is reached when a portion of the contract or article under consideration, is changed then agreed to by both parties (TEA team and TSD team). This portion is initialed, timed and dated then set aside from the remaining issues still under consideration. This process continues until all items by both sides are complete; it is later announced that a TA on a contract has been reached by the parties.

**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) is based on this proper notification. Please contact Roberta if you have any questions.

**Region 7 Elections coming in March:** March 13, 14, and 15 have been set aside for voting in the MEA Region 7 elections. Your building representative will distribute a direction/information sheet to each member as Region 7 has been chosen to pilot an electronic version of the ballots. In past years, this election has been conducted under MEA By-laws which required the use of the double envelope procedure with the "green buckets". Most of you are familiar with that process. The electronic version should save the time and expense of paper ballots with double envelopes and distribution of ballot specific to each of the 18 Regions in the state. However, the success of the program will be determined by the participation rate of the regions selected for the pilot, including Troy in Region 7. Please participate in this election of regional members who represent your interests at the state level in various positions.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Parent/Teacher Conferences on March 6 provided great opportunities to share your outstanding programs with parents when discussing student achievement. Please remember that if you need to be absent for either session, Article 6.4 states that conferences shall be made up. If you are charged either personal business or leave time for the conference absence, then a scheduled make-up time is not required.

**PAC Drive 2008:** Many thanks are extended to those members who contributed hard earned dollars to make a difference for public school employees through PAC. Special thanks and recognition are extended to Sara Ritter and Kaity O'Riordan for spearheading this year's event. Even though the formal drive has ended, contributions can still be made to MEA PAC and forwarded to Roberta Masters at the SODA Office. Any and all financial efforts are greatly appreciated and are not subject to a time factor. We will take your money at any event; anytime, anywhere, anyway . . . you get the idea!

**MEA Encourages Service Credit Purchase Before June 30 to avoid penalties:** MEA members who wish to buy service credit so they can retire early need to make the purchase by June 30 to avoid penalties imposed by new state legislation. Current MEA members, who have satisfied the minimum service credit requirement to receive a pension and the minimum age requirement, are eligible to receive the maximum health insurance premium benefit—the state pays 90 percent of the school employee's health care costs, the employee pays 10 percent.

Under new legislation passed last fall, if you wait to purchase service credit until on or after July 1, 2008, that only qualifies you to receive an earlier pension. The insurance premium subsidy won't begin until you would have become eligible for retirement without the purchase of service credit.

Chuck Agerstrand (MEA retirement consultant) said members who want to purchase service credit by the June 30 cut-off date need to begin the process immediately. "You can't wait until the last minute to do this—you'll be facing time constraints if you wait until the month of June," Agerstrand said. "You need to do this now." The service credit purchase does not have to be completely paid by June 30, Agerstrand said. Members who enter into a tax deferred payment (TDP) contract that carries payment beyond June 30 will NOT be subject to the penalties of the new legislation.

For information on purchasing service credit, contact the Office of Retirement Services at 800/381-5111 or go to its Web site at [www.michigan.gov/orsschools](http://www.michigan.gov/orsschools) (excerpt taken from MEA Voice Today).

**TEA Retirement Reception 2008:** While Spring is still a few weeks away and summer is a faint glow in the distance, the traditional TEA Retirement Reception will be here before you know it. Please mark you calendars now and exclusively reserve the date of **Wednesday, MAY 21, 2008** for the reception. Further details will be provided in the April newsletter.

#### **March Calendar of Events:**

**March 4** Exec Board & School Board Recognition-Teacher of the Year; **March 6** Parent-Teacher Conferences  
**March 11** TEA Executive Board at Wass-4:00 p.m.; **March 13-15** Region 7 Elections Electronic Version  
**March 18** TEA Rep Assembly-Leonard Elementary-Media Center-4:15 p.m.  
**March 21-28** No school; Spring Break K-12; **March 31**-School resumes

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