

# WEA PRIDE

Wauwatosa Professionals  
Making a Difference

Wauwatosa Education Association

13835 W. Burleigh Rd. Brookfield, WI 53005

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## Reflections on 'A Wauwatosa Year'

Significant events affect Tosa teachers, education

### Nationalevents

#### Health care legislation passes in March

President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable care Act into law on March 23, 2010, saying "everybody should have some basic security when it comes to their health care."



President Obama

### Stateevents



Gov. Jim Doyle

#### QEO repealed in July

The Wisconsin Legislature repealed the so-called qualified economic offer, or QEO, limit that has generally held increases in wages and fringe benefits to 3.8 percent annually for teachers since 1993. Gov. Jim Doyle signed the new law on July 25, 2009.

#### Changed law allows Wisconsin to apply for Race to Top funds

The Wisconsin Legislature changed state law last fall to allow the use of state assessments in teacher evaluations. This made the state eligible to apply for Race to the Top funding, which it did not receive in the first round of grants this spring.



State Superintendent  
Tony Evers

### Localevents

#### WEA financially restored, re-organized, solvent

Under the determined leadership of Debbie Brent, the WEA has emerged solvent from the financial morass left by the previous president. Finances have been re-organized and safeguards put in place to prevent any misuse of funds.

#### WEA contract ratified

In December 2009 the School Board and WEA ratified the new teacher contract, a mere six months after the expiration of the previous contract. It was the most timely ratification in recent memory.

#### Building Leadership Teams formed

To address concerns, provide a liaison to professional development in the District and best use the PLC time that occurs on Wednesdays, each school formed a Building Leadership Team. These teams spent three intensive days in training last summer, as well as five days during the year to bridge the professional development gap from the district to buildings and to provide a resource in the buildings as concerns/issues arise regarding how best to meet the goals established by both the district and the building.

#### Contract maintenance meetings on track

After a trial last year to see if/how effective these meetings could be, all involved agreed that these meetings should continue. Monthly meetings with WEA officers, Sandy Nass, Dr. Ertl and Dan Chanan (HR) deal with concerns/issues before they become out of control and provide a forum to inform, collaborate and discuss the issues dealing with the contract as well as non-contract issues that have an impact on teaching staff.

#### Metro Milwaukee Legislative Council formed

The Metro Milwaukee Legislative Committee was formed to allow local associations to pool their resources, time, talent and finances. Kathy Ceel is the liaison from WSC board to both WEA and WA-WM so that those taking on the legislative piece would have a go-to person for the latest updates and direction.

## Inside the Pride



### 2-3 Friend of Education Awards

Parents, staff and community members are honored for their service to Wauwatosa Public School students. Plank Road School recipients and their dogs are featured on page 3.

### 4-5 WEAC-RA Report

The WEAC Representative Assembly met in April. Read what happened and what it was like.

### 5 Your Viewpoint Counts

Is teacher tenure still necessary? This is a sensitive issue and one that is receiving more attention nationwide. Read about it and submit your opinions.

### 6 NEA, WEAC News Briefs

The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education makes its annual appeal, and the WEAC Summer Academy information is highlighted.

## Recipients include parents, staff, community volunteers

• by linda barrington

The Friend of Education Awards may be the most entertaining award ceremony you've never attended.

That's right, I said, entertaining. Check this out:

- A happy little dog stared out at the crowd from his owner's arms. [See photo at right.]
- A trio of teachers chanted a parody of "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" to their administrative assistant and presented her with a wand with a silver star.
- A principal (who shall be unnamed) hauled up his administrative assistant by the arm to stand by him during his remarks about her worthiness for the award.

Yes, this was an event to be remembered, and it was certainly entertaining. Faculty from each school presented the awards to the recipient(s) from their school, and along the way, added their own insights and personal touch.

A reading of these recipients' good deeds at Wauwatosa Public Schools makes you wonder how these people have time to get their own jobs done and lead a life of their own. The recipients were exemplary in their volunteerism and their helpfulness to Wauwatosa students.

Wilson nominated parent Laurie Kotlarek for her commitment and active participation to the school, the students and the community.

Madison honored its custodian Donald Fischer, known as Mr. Don by students who love him as much as he loves them. His High Interest Day subterranean adventure into the depths of the school is highly popular with fifth graders.

Parent Wendy Haganman was honored by the Jefferson staff. She has volunteered in classes and for projects for 11 years, and the best part is her enthusiasm and dedication.

Roosevelt nominated parent Wendy Swenson who has served on committees, chaired events and volunteered in classrooms – so her children would see how important their education is.

Parent Robert Wahl from Underwood has chaired the Fire Safety House, helped organize the holiday pancake breakfast (even played Santa!), managed school book fairs



photo by Linda Barrington

Plank Road School recipient Jim Perry brought along his Italian greyhound, Marco, when Sabine Larson presented him and Danielle Weidner with their school's Friend of Education Award. Perry's t-shirt promotes the Reading Education Assistance Dogs program.

and volunteered at dances, the carnival and movie nights.

All the recipients are worthy of mention, but these few summaries can at least give you an idea of the range and extent of their volunteerism.

This WEA event is organized by Carleen Ranfranz and Katie Wilkes. Start thinking about who to nominate next year and plan to attend. The awards have been presented every year since 1984.

### Friend of Education Award Recipients

**East,** Kay Lorenzen  
**West,** Michele Cervantes  
**Longfellow,** Tracy Lockhart  
**Whitman,** Lisa Steinke  
**Eisenhower,** Mary Neumann  
**Jefferson,** Wendy Haganman  
**Lincoln,** Lee Spolar  
**McKinley,** Cindy Weiland-Wehrley  
**Madison,** Donald Fischer  
**Roosevelt,** Wendy Swenson  
**Underwood,** Robert Wahl  
**Washington,** Pat Scopoline  
**Wilson,** Laurie Kotlarek  
**Detention Center,** Jeff Valleskey  
**Plank Road School,** Jim Perry & Danielle Weidner  
**School of Trades,** Joe Weisling & Tom Jarosz

### Mary Neumann, Eisenhower Friend of Education

Mary, Mary THE Office Fairy,  
 You keep it all together,  
 Multi-tasking through the day  
 In all kinds of weather.

Computer whiz and budget pro,  
 Our questions never-ending,  
 What would we do if you  
 were not  
 A pro at online spending?

Mary, Mary THE Office Fairy,  
 We know the way to your  
 heart!

Chocolates, jokes and compliments  
 Help to give your day a great start!

You tend to bumps, sick stomachs & bruises  
 While answering phone calls and filing.  
 You smile and sing and mind not a thing  
 While higher the work keeps on piling.

Mary, Mary the office Fairy,  
 You're such a busy bee!  
 The hub of all we do at Ike  
 And you do it all with glee!

When you call for help or need a hand,  
 We swoop and jump and play like a band  
 For none of us could ever repay  
 What you do for us each and every day!



Mary, Mary THE office Fairy,  
 Never ever flustered,  
 Clearing paper jams and greeting guests  
 You sure do cut the mustard!

Whether helping kids who are lost or sick,  
 Or calling for a mop real quick,  
 Or helping the administrator here at  
 school,  
 You're so composed and always cool!

Mary, Mary THE Office Fairy,  
 Here with us just a few years,  
 We've grown to love and depend on you  
 And have shared many laughs and tears!

Your willingness to do all that we ask  
 Without question or complaint  
 Makes you stand out above the rest.  
 Mary, you are a Saint!

Mary Mary THE Office Fairy,  
 Our worries are at a zero.  
 We all agree you've come to be  
 A true Eisenhero!!

*This was the presentation given at the Awards Ceremony, written by Lisa Heisel, Barb Forbes, Kris Jack, Sharon Kiernen and Matt Schimenz. Lisa also presented Mary with her very own fairy wand.*



Eddie, an Italian greyhound, listens to a student reading. “The dogs won’t judge [the students] if they’re stumbling over a word or not reading fluently,” Plank Road teacher Fred Harris said.



Opal, a pit bull, lies on the floor between a reading student and Danielle Weidner. “These guys love these dogs,” Weidner said. The Brew City Bullies sponsor the Bully Buddy program to reach out to kids through their pit bulls.



Each dog is leashed and accompanied by its owner during the reading sessions. Eddie’s owner is Karyn Sehmer. Eddie changes position frequently while listening.

## R.E.A.D. and Brew City Bullies enrich students’ reading

• by sabine larson

Jim Perry has been training dogs for 50 years and has provided countless volunteer hours sharing his knowledge about dogs and, most importantly, helping my students read better. His four dogs, two whippets and two Italian greyhounds, offer the best nonjudgmental listening ears.

R.E.A.D., a program that Jim supports, stands for Reading Education Assistance Dogs. Children who participate get a chance to work on their reading fluency, confidence, comprehension, plus the fun of meeting a new companion.

“The students have no inhibitions reading to a dog,” Jim said. “The more they practice, the better they read.”

During the past two school years, Jim has borrowed and brought numerous other dogs for our students to read to such as a mastiff, a boxer, a Russian wolfhound, a great Dane, a labradoodle, and many others.

Jim has also set up a race

track for his whippets on our school grounds called lure coursing. Whippets can run up to 45 miles per hour!!! It was a thrilling experience.

I met Danielle Weidner through Jim Perry and the Serocki family, the founders of the Brew City Bully Club. It is a local organization working to change the negative reputation of pit bulls while reducing fear in the community through education.

Danielle has brought her pit bull, Opal – a beautiful girl dog decked out with purple toe nail polish and a friendly disposition.

“Kids can relate to dogs and this gives me an opportunity to open that door,” Weidner said. “While reading to the dogs, we can talk and socialize.”

Danielle has also recruited numerous other pit bull owners to bring in their dogs to continue with the R.E.A.D. program that Jim started and to educate our students about respecting pit bulls and end dog fighting.

Bob, a basset hound, wears his trademark cowboy hat during the reading at Plank Road School. The R.E.A.D. program and the Bully Buddy program send owners and their dogs once a month for reading. Bob was brought by his owner Laura Pelky. “This is such a cool program,” said Dee Grassman, Plank Road administrative assistant. “Some of these kids are so shy and when they read to the dogs, they forget they’re reading aloud. There’s no pressure on them.”



photos by Linda Barrington

Above: Pit bull Opal stretches out while listening to a student. Right: Jim Perry of R.E.A.D. chats with David of Brew City Bullies while petting Cholo, Danielle Weidner’s pit bull. In the background Weidner asks a question of the student reading to Opal.





photo by Linda Dusel

Some of the West Suburban Council delegates to the WEAC Representative Assembly: (front) Tom Zigan, Sonja Nelson, Jeff Sikich, Sandy Sikich; (back) Michelle Daavettila, Colleen Haase, Jessica Thimm, and Amy Graff. Zigan and Nelson are from Wauwatosa; the rest are from West Allis. Neal Storey and Linda Dusel are not in the photo.

## WEAC-RA fulfills purpose with effective participation

• by linda barrington

Democracy in action is a good way to describe the WEAC Representative Assembly that meets once a year. Members of the Assembly elect WEAC officers, hear reports from standing committees and officers, discuss and vote on new business items and approve dues for the coming year.

Wauwatosa had four delegates this year as part of the West Suburban Council contingent: Linda Dusel, Sonja Nelson, Neal Storey and Tom Zigan.

“The whole process of government was very intriguing,” Dusel said. “As a rep, you really have some power.”

Anyone can propose a resolution under new business. Proposed items for new business go to a committee the first night and then appear on the list of new business items the next day.

The School Funding Reform resolution was one to which people reacted strongly,

Dusel said. The Assembly approved this item which directs WEAC to “organize and coordinate a statewide grassroots action... that dramatically demonstrates the need for school funding reform.” the resolution directs WEAC to “publicly unveil a school funding formula” by Nov. 15 and get it introduced into the Legislature by Feb. 1, 2011.

Other resolutions were about controversial topics, according to Dusel. WEAC’s Exceptional Education Committee asked for a member poll to gather real data about “members’ ability to seclude or restrain violent students in the school setting.”

They want more than just reports of sensational incidents. The resolution was approved.

And then there’s the perennial resolution to refuse affiliation with the Hortonville local until “until all of the original strikebreakers are no longer employed in the [district].” This resolution was also approved.



photo by Linda Dusel

UniServ Director Sandy Nass congratulates Tom Zigan for his WEAC Presidential Award, given by President Mary Bell for “outstanding service to the education profession and the WEAC membership.” Zigan has been a WEAC-RA delegate for nearly 30 years, has served as chair of the WEAC Public Relations committee and has been a member of its Instruction and Professional Development committee and a member of the NEA Public Relations committee. In addition, he has been WEA president, co-chair of our bargaining team, our UniServ board member and vice-president, and representative to the WEAC Board of Directors. He has also been president and board member of the Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted.

“The whole process of government was very intriguing. As a rep, you really have some power.”

Linda Dusel, WEAC-RA rep



## Is teacher tenure still necessary?

Tenure is under attack. The century-old system of protecting experienced teachers from arbitrary dismissal — long viewed as sacred — has triggered hot political debates in several states.

A bill in Colorado that would change tenure rules and tie them to student performance passed out of a Senate committee [in April] and has the support of Democratic Gov. Bill Ritter. A Florida bill to abolish tenure was vetoed [last] month

### What's your opinion?

Add your comments to the discussion and we'll publish them in the fall issue of the WEA Pride. Send your thoughts to Linda Barrington at [lbarring@wi.rr.com](mailto:lbarring@wi.rr.com).

by Republican Gov. Charlie Crist, but a similar bill is pending in Louisiana.

The advent of tenure, which coincided roughly with World War I and the suffragist movement, was meant to protect teachers, who, in olden days, were often fired for reasons that had nothing to do with their work, including race.

Teachers were often let go when a new political party came to power locally, or if the principal wanted to hand out jobs

to his friends, or even if a teacher got pregnant.

“These laws were passed in state after state to protect good teachers from arbitrary actions,” says Dennis Van Roekel, president of the National Education Association, which is the country's largest teachers union.

This information taken from the National Public Radio website: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126349435>

## Representatives to WEAC-RA find experience valuable

*continued from page 4*

For all new business items, there's an opportunity for discussion. People come up to the microphones holding a card that indicates whether the comments will be in favor of the motion, in opposition to it or in need of more information. This allows the president to call on a variety of people.

With 804 voting delegates, it's important to make sure all voices are heard and the discussion is not accidentally slanted toward one viewpoint.

Not all resolutions are passed and some things are referred to committee for further study and evaluation.

During the assembly, delegates are seated at tables according to their UniServ district, so all the West Suburban Council delegates are together.

When delegates arrive in the assembly area the first day, there is a lot of campaigning going on and speeches given by those running for WEAC offices and for positions as NEA Directors.

One of the last things the Assembly takes up is the budget report and establishment of dues for the coming year.

A collection is taken up from the delegates for the NEA Fund for Children and Education. This year delegates contributed \$20,000. This is a big deal at the assembly, so delegates ask for donations from their members well in advance of that weekend. [See article on page 6 for more information about the fund.]



photo by Linda Dusel

Delegates have time to move around the assembly area to discuss issues with other UniServ groups. This year the WEAC-RA was held in Green Bay.

This year's Assembly met in Green Bay, next year it will be in Madison, and in 2012 it will be in Wisconsin Dells.

Delegates are elected by their locals. WEA is entitled to 11 positions, but only four Wauwatosa members ran and were elected. WEAC funds pay for the hotel costs and convention meals. West Suburban Council UniServ pays for the Saturday night dinner and mileage for delegates. There is funding for all 11 people, should they be elected.

Being a member of the Assembly is

important, Dusel said. “It's a learning experience about the power of the assembly and the importance of people's voices being heard. I was impressed with being there.”

A WEAC-RA delegate is elected for a three-year term. Delegates attend one Assembly per year for one weekend at the end of April. Elections are in March. If you are interested in running, contact WEA vice-president Ann Ward who handles our elections.

## **WEAC Summer Academy**

**WHEN:** Sunday, July 25 - Wednesday, July 28, 2010

**WHAT:** Strong local associations lead to a stronger WEAC organization. The focus for this Summer Academy will be building the capacity of our locals. Tracks will be offered to provide locals leaders the tools, resources and support they need to build the effectiveness of their local. Tracks will be focused on responsibilities specific to your leadership role in the local association. Teams of leaders from each local are encouraged to attend!

**WHERE:** Holiday Inn Stevens Point – Convention Center Hotel, Hwy 10 East; 1001 Amber Avenue, Stevens Point

### **HOW SOON?**

Registration deadline: Friday, July 16, 2010

Lodging deadline: Sunday, July 4, 2010

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION?**

[http://www.weac.org/Calendar\\_And\\_Events/calendar/SummerAcademy.aspx](http://www.weac.org/Calendar_And_Events/calendar/SummerAcademy.aspx)



The WEA Academy for Professional Development is a division of WEAC. The Academy partners with colleges and universities to bring their online programming to our members at reduced rates.

The Academy also creates courses by members for members. Their long-running ESP certification program helps ESPs better prepare for the challenges they face each day. The Quality Educator Interactive provides storage and guidance for PI-34 portfolios. In the future they will also offer a video library and educator resources.

## **Support the NEA Fund for Children, Public Education**

*Please help us advocate for great public schools at the federal level*

With so much going on in our own communities and at the State Capitol, it is sometimes easy to forget that what goes on in Washington, D.C. also has a big impact on our schools. The truth is that the federal government can and does get very involved in how we run and fund public education in this country.

One prime example is the “No Child Left Behind” law, which desperately needs some common sense revisions and full funding. On a more positive note, there was last year’s federal stimulus package, which helped save or create 325,000 education jobs in

the country and provided \$25 billion in school construction bonds. We now need an Emergency Education Jobs Proposal to save and create jobs during 2010 and 2011.

It is very important that we work to elect federal office holders who believe that every school should be a great public school and are willing to support legislation to make it happen. The way we support candidates like this is through the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, our Political Action Committee or PAC.

The fund is made up of voluntary contributions from

current and retired NEA members, their families and NEA/state affiliate staff members. By law, only voluntary contributions (never dues dollars) can be given to federal candidates.

And contributions made to state and local PACs cannot be put into the federal fund because they can only be used to support and advocate for candidates running for state and local office.

Every dollar contributed goes directly to electing public education candidates. The contributions do not pay any administrative or fundrais-

ing costs. The funds go to help both Democrats and Republicans who are truly strong supporters of education.

You may be asked by one of your building reps to support the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Please consider a contribution of \$36 – \$3 a month in the course of a year – or however much you feel you can afford. It will be a very important investment in the future of public education in Wisconsin and throughout the country.

*This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members, Federal Statute CFR 100.8 (b)(4)*

### **We’re proud of...YOU!**

We want to honor you and/or your colleagues. If you know of anyone’s accomplishments, awards, etc., including your own, that we should know about, e-mail Linda Barrington at [lbarring@wi.rr.com](mailto:lbarring@wi.rr.com). The PRIDE would like to honor people in each issue. The next issue will be published in October.

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