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## President's Message

by Denise King



Dear MCEA Members,

This summer 23 members represented the members of Monmouth County Education Association at the NEA Representative Assembly in Washington DC. Their dedication to the association is commendable since it took place over the week of July 4th. Thank

you to all those who have participated! Next summer the NEA RA will be held in Boston Massachusetts. Many ask what is the NEA RA. It is the National Education Association's Annual Representative Council meeting. It is comprised of elected representatives from all over the country inclusive of members from each county and many local associations. It would be a privilege to see you as part of the MCEA delegation next summer!

This year many things have happened at the Monmouth County Education Association. Your leadership team has developed programs and relationships to support you in your classrooms. I have seen many new members attending events with a large increase in overall attendance. I have met with politicians, financial experts and other leaders to provide training, as well as meet and greet events to support you in all areas. As we gather information provided by you; we are able to enhance programs and directly email you our upcoming trainings.

I encourage you to attend at least one event this year to see what Monmouth County Education Association has to offer. Your dues dollars are spent on opportunities for professional development, advocacy, and pro public education events. The information

for all MCEA events can be found at [mceanj.com](http://mceanj.com). I look forward to seeing you throughout the school year. I would be happy to come to your local to meet members and answer question regarding MCEA. You are vital to the success of our public schools and to the Monmouth County Education Association. Your dedication to your profession is inspiring and truly motivating.

As many of you are aware, I am running for the position of NJEA Secretary/Treasurer. I have been attending meetings and events throughout the state of New Jersey. I am committed to the Monmouth County Education Association as your president. Your continued support of me and the leadership team of MCEA is greatly appreciated. As always, I am available to answer question or concerns through phone or email. I thank you for your continued support.



Members of the Monmouth County Education Association attended the NEA/RA Convention in Washington DC last July.

# Legislative Action Teams Keep Us Informed

by Mary O'Keefe

With 2016 in our rear-view mirror and 2017 straight ahead, it is time to look to the future. The fight for public education may have become harder, but with the dedication of the women and men who work in our schools, we can still have a powerful impact on the issues that affect us and our students each day. It is more important than ever that we let our legislators know that we are cognizant of the issues and we are willing to stand up, voice our concerns, and our opinions. This is not always the easiest thing to do. This is often made more difficult when elected and appointed leaders are empowered to make decisions that impact our schools, but who do not fully understand how those decisions affect all of us. Therefore, it is more important than ever that our members are well versed in issues regarding pension, healthcare, testing, evaluations, working conditions, and privatization, just to name a few. By educating and organizing our members, I truly believe there is nothing we cannot do!

Each of our local Legislative Action Teams (LAT) will be sending out information to keep you informed about decisions that are being made in Trenton and in Washington D.C. And so, it is time to do the only thing we can do--- we need to roll up our sleeves and get back in the political arena to make sure the voices of all of us are heard. We need to organize, make sure each of our members are engaged and informed about the issues that have the most impact on our profession. Members may be called upon to write letters and/or make phone calls to our legislators expressing our support or displeasure with upcoming legislation. Our local LATs need our members to act quickly when asked and we thank each of you for all the help and support you give to your local and county LATs.

I would also like to take a moment to say a big THANK YOU!! to all our LAT members. Without your hard work and commitment, we could not have accomplished all we have in the past. You are the individuals who get the word out to our members, and without you, that job would be impossible.

This year's NJEA Legislative Conference is being held on Saturday, February 18, 2017 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Somerset, NJ. This is a great conference to attend because you get to hear directly from our legislators about the topics that are important to you. There are breakout sessions where members can ask questions directly to our legislators. This is always a

very informative conference and a great way to learn more about the issues that affect public education and your profession.

The work you do with your students each day is vital to the future. Each of you deserves the respect and dignity that job entails. We need to continue to stand up and be heard by our elected officials. It may not always be easy or comfortable, but it is a job that I know each of us are up to.

## MCEA Moves Forward

by John Napolitani Sr.



The MCEA has been hard at work adding new workshops, programs, and events to our calendar for the benefit of the entire membership. The idea of moving our office to a more accessible area has been a huge success. More and more members are utilizing our services and enjoying the workshops that are being provided in the office. Bringing the Optical Academy has been such a huge success, that we have decided to schedule this quarterly. Our next one will be held on February 13, 2017 between the hours of 12 and 7:00pm.

Since the resignation of our full time Administrative Assistant, we have hired three part-time staff and it has been a seamless transition. John Rothhauser has taken on the lead role in the afternoon. John has done an outstanding job making sure the office is running efficiently and effectively. Our two additional part time employees are in the office from 11am to 3:30pm to assist and answer phone calls. We are currently in the process creating new job descriptions for these positions, as well as having this committee decide what the hours of operation should be and what other recommendations should be made for the office.

As stated several times before, this office is for the entire membership. We welcome you to schedule your events here provided that the office is not being utilized. This can be done with a simple call to John.

In closing, I want to wish each and every member a very Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, and a Happy New Year. Please be safe and enjoy the holiday break with your friends and family!

# NJEA Executive Committee Member Shares Ideas

by Vicki McKeon



As the elected Monmouth County NJEA Executive Committee member, there are many duties and responsibilities I must fulfill. One is to serve on the NJEA PAC Operating Committee and another is to assist at interviews and provide input into the hiring of NJEA Region 9 consultants and field representatives. Here is what has been hap-

pening in NJEA and Monmouth County in these two areas over the last four months.

The members of NJEA have made it clear that pension security in retirement is a big priority, and we must support candidates who not only say they support our issues and priorities, but who actually keep their word. NJEA President Wendall Steinhauer reminded us at the August NJEA PAC Operating Committee meeting, that in 2017 the entire Legislature and governorship will be up for election. If we want to be effective in that election, we must start organizing for success today. The NJEA PAC Operating Committee gave its approval during this meeting for the association to make endorsements and provide support for endorsed candidates in the 2017 primary elections. At the October 8th meeting, the 125-member political action committee (NJEA PAC) unanimously endorsed Ambassador Phil Murphy for the Democratic Gubernatorial Primary. Following this endorsement, NJEA hosted a discussion with Ambassador Murphy at the NJEA Convention on November 11th. He definitely showed his support of public education, our pension security, and not linking evaluation to test scores. If you would like to read about Phil Murphy, in his own words, go to the following webpage: [http://www.njea.org/njea-media/pdf/Murphy\\_OwnWords.pdf?1480604120219](http://www.njea.org/njea-media/pdf/Murphy_OwnWords.pdf?1480604120219).

In accordance with the NJEA hiring procedures, I attended a meeting on September 21st, along with NJEA Regional Director of Uniserv central, Mr. Jim Loper and Region 9 local presidents to discuss the replacement of field representative Joseph Keough who passed away suddenly. We gathered information about the characteristics that the local presidents were looking for in a successor. The following characteristics were compiled:

- Someone who is willing to be in contact with the local presidents.
- Someone who is able to get answers to questions.
- Someone who has a sense of Monmouth County,

especially the political climate.

- Someone who follows the chain of command (not letting members step over the president).
- Someone who has leadership experience.
- Someone who has organizational skills
- Someone who is well-rounded and is a strong advocate.
- Someone who makes the local leaders aware of what is available.
- Someone who is up front and doesn't sugar coat things.
- Someone with a calm demeanor.
- Someone who is a no-nonsense person, but shows it with diplomacy.
- Someone who has a comprehensive understanding of what is going on in each of his/her locals.

There were many applicants for the position. Four applicants advanced to the interviews that were held at NJEA Headquarters on October 12th. Present at this first round of interviews were myself, Jim Loper, and NJEA Vice President, Marie Blisten. Two candidates advanced to the Property and Personnel Committee for a final interview that was held on November 28th. Christopher Johnson was offered the position and will be approved at the December 12th Executive Committee meeting. Hopefully, he will be able to start in January. Chris has been a teacher in Freehold Township since 2005, a Uniserv consultant in Region 7 for the past three years, and the Monmouth County Pride Chair since 2014. He will be missed at the MCEA office, but will be an asset to all at Uniserv, and I'm sure that he will still be very active at our county functions and I look forward to working with Chris in his new capacity as a Region 9 field rep.

## Bridges at the Shore

Kathy Logan, Vice President of the Monmouth County Retired Education Association, is the Director of this non-profit organization that serves families in Red Bank, Freehold, and other Monmouth County communities. On the third Friday of the month, clothes, toiletries, coats, and bagged lunches and other daily necessities are distributed to families in need. At the MCREA December meeting, toys, books, and gift cards are donated to help spread the holiday spirit. If you would like to donate, contact Kathy Logan: [lathy0731@aol.com](mailto:lathy0731@aol.com) 732-706-9467

## MCEA Provides Workshops

by Tracie Yostpille



The Monmouth County Education Association continues to provide quality professional development for our members. We are pleased to see so many of our members taking advantage of the wonderful workshops offered at our Neptune office.

When you come to a professional development workshop given at the MCEA office, you are fed and educated! What a great combination! Our professional development workshops are given by NJEA Professional Development Consultants who are either active or retired educators. They know what it is like to be in the classroom and that does make a difference in the quality of their workshops. MCEA is trying to provide a variety of workshops for our vast membership. A new PD series this year is the C.A.R.E.S. workshops. This five part series can be taken in full by attending all five sessions or individually, attending a single session. The focus of the workshop series is to help various educational professionals educate the at risk student. Make sure you check the MCEA website for workshop session descriptions. This year the MCEA has also scheduled workshops to educate our members on their financial well-being. We have conducted workshops on Social Security and retirement planning. All who attended found the workshops to be beneficial. Check our calendar for more scheduled dates.

The MCEA has changed over to our new website at [mceanj.com](http://mceanj.com). You can check it regularly to see what workshops are scheduled and you can register to attend. Under the assistance of our new office manager, John Rothausser, we are using Eventbrite to register for our PD sessions, meetings, and events. If we have your personal email address, John sends the Eventbrite invitation directly to you. If you aren't receiving the workshop notifications, you just need to give John your email address to be added to the email group.

## Monmouth County Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to Sondra Lougee who was named the Monmouth County Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey Education Association. Ms. Lougee is a special education teacher at Raritan Valley School in Hazlet.

"County Teachers of the Year represent the innovative and exemplary practices that are going on in classrooms throughout our state," said Chelsea Collins, a sixth-grade language arts teacher from Salem County and the 2015-16 State Teacher of the Year. "This program not only recognizes educators for the exemplary work they are doing each day, but it also creates opportunities for them to come together as advocates for the profession and to ultimately impact student learning in profound ways."

## Monmouth County Labor Coalition Dinner



LD 11 Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling and Assemblywoman Joane Downey show their support of the Monmouth County Labor Coalition at a dinner held at IPlay America on December 3, 2016.



Tracie Yostpille, MCEA 2nd Vice President, Chris Johnson, MCEA Pride Chairman, Denise King, MCEA President, and Vin Gopal, Monmouth County Democratic Chairman, enjoy the festivities at the Monmouth County Labor Coalition Holiday Dinner.