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President's Message

by Denise King



This summer nine delegates went to Houston for the National Educational Association Representative Assembly (NEARA). At NEARA, many of the delegates brought new business items to the floor which are now part of NEA. I want to thank all of those who attended and spent a week in July representing Monmouth County, as well as NJEA, for all their hard work and dedication to our association. Unfortunately, this past summer showcased the lowest turnout in attendance from Monmouth County at NEARA, with only nine members present. The event is free to attend for union members, and NJEA pays for the hotel stay and provides a stipend at the end to offset expenses. Monmouth County provides lunch during the meeting and one dinner. The next NEARA will take place in Atlanta, GA from July 2nd to July 6th. MCEA is allowed approximately fifty members to attend. We would love to see as many MCEA members as possible, so pencil it into your calendar and contact your local president to express your interest.

Another item from the summer of 2019: The MCEA hosted a leadership luncheon in conjunction with the NJEA UniServ Field Representatives. The leaders were trained and provided with information in order to assist them in their roles as executive committee team members in their local associations.

More recently, throughout the fall, the MCEA office has hosted trainings on legislative action, professional development, and advocacy. We look forward to seeing all of you at the MCEA overnight, which will be at Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch on February 21st and 22nd. All members are invited to attend to learn about both professional development and advocacy

roles within the association.

At the May Representative Council meeting, the By-laws and Constitution were updated and approved. The new version is found in the MCEA calendar. The new bylaws consist of staggered terms for leadership. This means that the bylaws also include a one-time year-long extension of term for the President, the Second Vice President and the Recording Secretary. This spring you'll be voting for First Vice President, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer.

As a reminder, the Representative Council meets four times a year and consists of members from each local. If you are not sending someone from your local, please consider attending. As always, I look forward to working with you to provide a strong leadership, as well as trainings for all members and leaders.

I wish you all a healthy and happy holiday season and look forward to seeing you in January!

Upcoming MCEA Events

January 8: Social Security Workshop, 4pm--MCEA Office

January 13: LAT Meeting, 4pm--MCEA Office

January 22: Rep. Council, 4:15 pm--Jumping Brook

January 30: Building Respect for Diversity Workshop, 4pm--MCEA Office

February 5: Collective Bargaining Council, 4:15 pm--Renaissance, Ocean, NJ

February 21-22: MCEA Overnight, 4pm--Ocean Place, Long Branch, NJ

Association Searches for New Office Space

by John Napolitani



As we head into the holiday season, the MCEA Leadership continues to be active. We just returned from the NJEA Convention which was well attended by many Monmouth County members. Our MCEA Luncheon held at Caesars was a huge success and we thank each and every member who took the time out of their schedules to attend and be part of the MCEA family.

As we end the year, we have begun the search for new office space. As we have come up with new and innovative ideas and workshops, we have outgrown the current space. I am presently heading up this search and keeping all options open. It is our hope to find space that we can purchase and possibly have additional offices to generate rental income for the MCEA to offset our own expenses. This is not a task that will be taken lightly as we need to make sure we find the best possible space available. This will be an ongoing search which I will keep the membership apprised.

In closing, we are all looking forward to the holiday season and break as it has truly been a very challenging year for most of us. I want to wish each and every member, as well as their families, a truly blessed and restful holiday break. We look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events in the new year.

Schnitzer Wins Award



MCEA congratulates Ginger Gold Schnitzer, former director of government relations for the NJEA, for receiving the 2019 NJEA Ruthann Sheer Award for distinguished service to education. The award is designed to call public attention to those who greatly serve New Jersey public schools and children. Over the span of her 22-year career with the

NJEA, Schnitzer helped to shape education policy in NJ. She worked on the current school funding formula, the Education Facilities Construction and Financing Act, and helped re-write the state's teacher tenure law. She also developed highly successful political action training programs and worked with association members to elect NJEA political action committee-endorsed candidates.

MCEA Provides Professional Learning

by Tracie Yostpille



Did you know the Monmouth County Education Association provides a robust schedule of professional learning for our members free of charge? The classes are provided by NJEA Professional Development Consultants who are either teachers or retired teachers. The classes are

a great way to fulfill your twenty hours of professional development as required by AchieveNJ and enjoy some collegial dialogue with your fellow Monmouth County educators. Each attending member receives a PD certificate for two hours of professional development once the class is completed. The classes start promptly at 4:00 with sandwiches, salads, and drinks provided. We use Eventbrite to sign up for our PD sessions so make sure we have your email address so we can send you notification of all our upcoming events or you can check our website at MCEANJ.org for upcoming offerings. Log in with your NJEA card number and password.

Our next X,Y,Z's of Retirement seminar is on Monday, January 27th. This informative workshop is one of our most well attended workshops, hosting over 150 members. Bob Bobik, our NJEA Pension Specialist, will take you through a two hour presentation that is a great overview of your retirement possibilities. A wonderful dinner is served so you can eat while listening to Bob and then start making your retirement plans.

Our MCEA, Monmouth and Middlesex, Joint County Overnight Conference is scheduled for Friday, February 21st and Saturday February 22nd at the Ocean Place Spa and Resort in Long Branch. Last year we had over three hundred attendees so make sure you register right away. Registration closes on December 16th. We have some very useful workshops scheduled for both professional development and professional advocacy. Sean Spiller, the NJEA Vice President, will be our guest speaker on Friday night. Come enjoy the professional development offerings and also have some fun with your colleagues!

NJEA Members Advocate for Pro-Education Candidates

by Erin Wheeler



As we reflect on the 2019 election and look forward to the 2020 election, we, as NJEA members, must continue to stay informed and advocate for pro-education candidates at all levels of government. To that end, in 2019, 86% of NJEA PAC endorsed candidates won their election. Information about NJ state bills and student assessment is listed below. In terms of 2020, there

will be many opportunities for members to get involved in order to support pro-education candidates. For now, if you would like to learn more about the presidential candidates and where they stand on educational issues, go to educationvotes.nea.org.

The 3 important bills:

1. A new Chapter 78 relief bill (A-5814) - this bill would reduce the amount most NJEA members pay toward their health insurance while guaranteeing savings for the state and local districts. An employee's contribution to his health care would be a percentage of his salary instead of the premium. This bill would offer 3 benchmark health insurance plans with premium sharing set from 2% to 8% of salary. Districts would be required to offer these plans and any plans required by their local contract.
2. ESP Job Justice bill (S-296) – this bill would prohibit employers from entering into subcontracting agreements during the term of an existing contract.
3. ESP Job Justice bill (S-3089) – this bill would extend to nonteaching employees the right to submit to binding arbitration any dispute regarding whether there is just cause for disciplinary action.

If you would like more information regarding the above bills or to take action in support of the bills please visit www.njea.org/lat.

In terms of statewide assessment, New Jersey requires more testing than federally required, spends more time on testing than any other state and wastes valuable education dollars on statewide testing. Educators know that the most important indicator of college and career readiness is the curriculum, NOT assessment. The state should invest in a rigorous sequence of courses instead of wasteful over-testing. If you would like more information please contact assessment@njea.org.

Congratulations Houghtaling and Downey



The Monmouth County Education Association congratulates Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling and Assemblywoman Joann Downey, LD11 PAC endorsed candidates, who were re-elected on November 4, 2019.

Join MCREA Before Retirement

by Kathy Hodecker

Once again the Monmouth County Retired Education Association is supporting the efforts of Ronald MacDonald House in Long Branch. In the past, both retirees and actives have helped by donating toiletries and towels and wash clothes. This year, Ronald MacDonald House administrators have requested participation in the POP TOP collection. (Ring tops from soda and other cans) Proceeds from these recyclable tops are used to pay utility bills. We hope you will again join with us to help this worthy cause. You can bring your POP TOPS to the MCEA office.

Please consider joining MCREA as an active. An actively employed professional or educational support staff member who is eligible for a NJ state pension may join NJREA prior to retirement at the current lifetime dues rate. An employee who elects NJREA pre-retirement lifetime membership may pay the dues in installment payments during one school year. The NJEA will bill the employee monthly. Dues may not be deducted from the employee's salary. For more details about this opportunity and payment installment options, call the NJEA Membership Division at 609-599-4561, ext.4123.

MCREA Will Celebrate Diamond Jubilee

by Lois Lyons

On March 22, 1960, some friends, all retired teachers, got together to have tea and sandwiches at Asbury Park High School to discuss the formation of a retired educators group. Those present were Henry Phoenix, Marion Gibbs, Lucie Bryant, Alice Holt, Charlotte Karney, Alma Govett and Lois Brown.

As of 2019, the MCREA has grown to number over 1,400 members. On June 9, 2020 we will celebrate 60 years of service, collegiality, activism and community with a luncheon at Jumping Brook Country Club in Neptune. The luncheon will feature speakers, music, videos with interviews of long-time members, and a slide show highlighting members and events through the decades. There will be a basket auction to benefit our Philanthropic Fund.

We retirees are very active. Our community volunteer service has grown to include hosting monthly Bayshore Luncheon Programs and projects with Habitat for Humanity. We collect food goods for Keyport Food Ministerium, and toys, backpacks, and school supplies for BRIDGES at the Shore. Our members hand-crafted a quilt and collected linens for Ronald McDonald House. This service list grows continually.

Our Government Relations, Health Benefits, and other committees are there to assist our fellow retirees, as well as active teachers. We Get Out the Vote and lobby in Trenton on issues of importance to all educators.

If you would like information about MCREA and/or the Diamond Jubilee Member Event, please visit our website www.monmouthcrea.org or visit us on Facebook at "Monmouth County Retired Educators Association."

Monmouth County Teacher of the Year

Beth English, who teaches English at Freehold Township High School, was named Monmouth County Teacher of the year. Beth inspires her students both in and out of the classroom. She has coached over 50 seasons in five different sports, turning struggling sports programs into state champions. Beth is also the Patriot Pride committee chair and adviser of the Patriot Female Athlete Mentorship Program.

"This incredible honor recognizes the work of our amazing educators and the impact they have on our students and communities," said NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller.

PRIDE Sponsors Community Events

by Diane Vistein

'Tis the season to volunteer for PRIDE events throughout Monmouth County!

The PRIDE committee is busy at work sponsoring events for community members in various areas of our county.

What better way to show the community that you care? Volunteer at an event!

The Monmouth County PRIDE Program has been sponsoring community based events throughout the year.

PRIDE has been able to provide more events this year than in the past and we hope to grow the program again next year with more exciting opportunities.

Whether your passion is learning, marching, honoring colleagues, or trick or treating, we have a vast variety of events which appeal to different groups within the Monmouth County community.

This year the MCEA is dedicating time to county and regional wellness fairs. Please check your email for the date of the next fair.

Friends of Education Award applications will be distributed within the month of January. Honor those community members who honor our public schools.

The banquet allows us to thank those community members who have gone above and beyond by dedicating their time and consideration to the Monmouth County Public Schools.

Remember to visit the MCEA website for upcoming PRIDE events, and thank you to all of you who have taken the time to not only attend PRIDE events, but have volunteered to make these events more successful.

MCEA Members Attend NEA RA Convention



Monmouth County Education members attended the NEA RA Convention in Houston, Texas in July.