

TAAAC ACTION REPORT



Your Professional Organization

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Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County, An MSTA/NEA Affiliate

December 2006

Retired TAAAC Leader Awarded



Edith McDougald

Edith McDougald, longtime TAAAC member, activist and elected leader received the Presidents Award from the local branch of the NAACP at its November banquet. Pictured in the photos are Edith, former president Sheila Finlayson and current president Tim Mennuti, TAAAC Director Yolie Marshall and her husband Jim, and TAAAC Director Grace Matthews with retired TAAAC Director Alva Sheppard Johnson.

CONGRATULATIONS!



TAAAC President Tim Mennuti and Sheila Finlayson



Yolie and Jim Marshall



Grace Matthews and Alva Sheppard

Your Employer May Owe You \$\$

If you have never before read *Contentia*, please read this edition. Through binding arbitration, TAAAC just enforced a contract provision that pays conditionally certificated educators based upon the professional salary scale under certain explicitly identified circumstances. Any TAAAC members who are now, or who have recently been, close to meeting eligibility requirements for a professional certificate should read this month's *Contentia* closely to ascertain whether they have been under paid.

**Seasons
Greetings
and
Happy
New Year!**



Bill Jones

On membership and the necessity of our work...

Over and over again members have been told that TAAAC bargaining power and lobbying influence is based in the size and activism of its membership. It is true and the same formula applies in any employee-employer relationship. Over the past seven months TAAAC has made a very concerted effort to raise membership. The effort was partially driven by an 80% market share threshold that the Board insisted upon before the implementation of a fairshare fee. But the effort would have been made even in the absence of any fairshare arrangement.

Why so? It is because of the tremendous impact that high membership has at the bargaining table, in the Council chambers, and before the General Assembly. As membership grows, your TAAAC staff and elected leaders can do more for you.

Throughout the month of October and a portion of November, TAAAC implemented what would be the final leg of its fall membership effort. As you are all aware, it involved an offer of \$100 to any

COMMENTARY

member who recruited a free-riding colleague and it provided to each member a list of the non-members in the school. The program was successful, and combined with the total recruitment effort, there were more than 850 new TAAAC members. That translates into organizational strength and influence. But the fact that non-contributors were identified to every TAAAC member in their school did generate some complaints.

(Our Agreement)..“is the only barrier preventing local educators from working entirely at the will – sometimes whim – of elected and appointed politicians who are their bosses.”

It was not a surprise that some non-members called or wrote to TAAAC to indicate their resentment at being identified to their dues-paying colleagues and to charge (erringly) that their privacy had been violated. Apparently, they believed it to be more appropriate for them to remain anonymous while draining resources paid for by their colleagues. But it was a bit surprising that a few of those e-mails and telephone calls came from members who felt some empathy for the resentment felt by non-member colleagues.

Too often, membership to TAAAC is treated like a participation in any local wholesale club or discount travel plan. Those types of join-if-you-want-discounts, don't-join-if-you-don't-want-to are easy. They allow non-joiners to opt out, and still cause injury to no one else. In our collective bargaining environment, opting out dumps an additional burden on member colleagues, and contributing dues to TAAAC, who bears the lawful burden of bargaining the salaries, hours, benefits and all other conditions of employment, is something that all Unit 1 employees should do willingly; if for no other reason than to pay their share of the burden. And by the way, membership status is not protected information.

The work TAAAC does is necessary, a fact that gives much greater significance to an opt out decision. There is very little in the way of protection for educators in law or regulation. Even the Fair Labor Standards Act does not apply. Our Negotiated Agreement is the sole protector of salaries, benefits, work hours, work year, planning time, and about 60 pages worth of other conditions of employment. It is the only barrier preventing local educators from working entirely at the will – sometimes whim – of elected and appointed politicians who are their bosses. What do you think would happen if the BOE unilaterally added 15 more days to the work year at no additional salary?

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From Contentia this month . . . *on pursuing violations of the Negotiated Agreement.*

On Saturday, November 25, 2006, the Association received a settlement award from a neutral arbitrator regarding a conditionally certificated Unit I employee's inappropriate placement on the salary scale. The employee had completed course work within 3 credits of receiving his degree and completed all Praxis requirements by October 26, 2005. Upon contact with staff at the TAAAC office, the employee learned he was eligible for placement on the professional salary scale based on language in Article 3D of the Negotiated Agreement which provides for such placement, once certain requirements are met. He requested, through the AACPS certification department, to be placed on the professional salary scale. The request was subsequently referred to the Human Resources department and denied. The employee contacted TAAAC staff and a grievance was prepared and filed. The grievance was denied at the next two levels and a request for arbitration was submitted.

The arbitrator heard arguments from the BOE that placement on the professional salary scale for conditionally certificated employees was limited to new hires, although no evidence was submitted to support the argument. TAAAC has never challenged this argument prior to this case, so no past practice of applying this provision only to new hires was accepted or condoned by the Association; however, the Association did provide notes from negotiations for the 1974-76 Agreement that included references to discussions regarding whom would be affected by a change in those specific provisions. There was no specific discussions referenced in the notes applying the changed provision to new hires only, but there was discussion regarding how many current employees would be affected.

The BOE also argued no mid-year adjustments are made to salary scale placement, which the arbitrator rejected as unproved. Additional arguments were made that the BOE would sustain an undue administrative burden if forced to monitor all employees' eligibility for professional salary scale placement. The arbitrator disagreed and awarded the employee back pay from October 26, 2005, resulting in compensation equal to the difference between the professional salary scale and the conditional salary scale; nearly \$2,500!

If any Unit I member has found themselves in a predicament similar to this issue, please contact the TAAAC office; you may be eligible for retroactive compensation. It is always in the best interest of any Unit I member to be persistent in pursuing the grievance process to address violations of the contract and not rely on a denial from an administrator as a final resolution to a potential violation.

(Commentary continued from page 2)

Well, in the absence of our collective bargaining agreement such a decision could be made, and it would be legal.

Everything TAAAC's accomplished for local educators, including the recent negotiation of what stands as the best agreement in the

state, from which all Unit 1 employees are benefiting and will continue to benefit for the remainder of their careers and in their subsequent retirement, is funded by member's dues. When free-riders do not contribute, someone else must pay their share. Perhaps it is not the non-contributors who should feel resentful.

Visit us on
the Web at
www.mstanea.org/taaac

Debt

There is no easy way to start this column. As I look at statistics about how much the average American family owes, it becomes more and more obvious that something needs to be done.

As teachers, we are role models for our students and frequently for members of the community.

From time to time I hear from teachers bemoaning the fact that they are way over their heads in debt.

Some took on significant debt loads while paying for college; others combined a college debt load with credit card debt. Later in life we worry about children, housing, auto, and consumer debt.

There is no one size fits all approach to debt management. There are, however, several ways to try and get a hold of our debt.

One of the oldest plans sounds like something your grandmother would tell you - Simply spend less than you make. Sounds simple but not always easy to accomplish.

Another possibility is to “forget” about your next pay raise. In other words, don’t spend up to your next pay raise. Instead save the difference between what you will be making and what you are making now. The next step is to “bum’ up” to this level when you get your next pay raise and then start saving the difference between the old raise and the new raise.

If you check with any consumer affairs counseling service, they will

also tell you not to eat out on a regular basis. Rather than buy something on the way home from work, fix something simple like a can of soup. Add bread and cheese and you have an inexpensive meal.

What else can you do to help stretch your hard earned dollars? One idea, especially at this time of year, is to “regift.” If you really didn’t want it but you think a friend would, why not pass it on?

The list goes on and on. Some people who like carbonated drinks buy a seltzer bottle and syrup to make their own drinks at home. Shop the sales for soft drinks. Know what the unit price per ounce is. Many times it is cheaper to buy a multi-liter bottle and keep it in the fridge. Usually the larger the volume the lower the unit price.

On a larger scale, we all need to have a savings plan and be aware of the various ways in which we need to protect ourselves.

We all need income protection plans. Anyone who doesn’t have one is flirting with financial disaster. TAAAC offers one of the most inexpensive income protection plans around - it is called the Sick Leave Bank. The concept is simple. You donate one sick day to the bank and the system pays you when you run out of sick days. There are, of course, rules and conditions so you really need to read the fine print. For some people this is a good start but they want more. For them we have access to multiple product lines from insurance providers.

If you are young and think that you will have plenty of time to worry about retirement, think again. Talk to some of the more senior teachers in your school about their financial concerns and worries.

One of the greatest advantages of being a young person is that time is truly on your side. Your money will grow and grow over time. Learn about the rule of “72.” It is a simple system for figuring out how long it will take your savings to double.

Have a Happy Holiday and be sure to make a resolution to get your financial house in order early in 2007.

Mr. Leopold’s Transition Team

County Executive-Elect John Leopold has released the names of appointees to his transition team. Two of those names will be quite familiar to most readers. Former TAAAC President Sheila Finlayson, along with former Interim Superintendent Nancy Mann, will be providing input to Mr. Leopold’s efforts in public education.

While neither TAAAC nor the AACPS had a part in these appointments, we congratulate the appointees on their selection. We further congratulate Mr. Leopold on his election win and commend his efforts to put together a knowledgeable and experience team.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Romona S. Alston
 Carla M. Bardell
 Lucinda T. Boese
 Shannon B. Burton
 Jamie L. Coniglio
 Erin D. Cramer
 Kelly L. Dillon
 April D. Dixon
 Cathy Fraser
 Meghan E. Fritz
 Tina N. Giunta
 Heather L. Gladd
 Eleanor D. Goff
 Susan Hartman
 Karen F. Jones
 Robyn P. Keckler
 Brenda Kirkland
 Michael Kochanski
 Sylvia G. Lanier
 Katherine A. Lee
 Michelise B. Loiselle
 Heather E. Luman
 Patricia S. Lynch
 Dustin L. Mcconnaughaf
 Holly A. Mcdermott
 Flora E. Mcferren
 Emily D. Moore
 Cheryl L. Mullis
 William C. Nalley
 Kristine M. Nichols
 John Penny
 Shelly M. Reynolds
 Elke C. Rogers
 Susan Rohrbaugh
 Michelle M. Runaldue
 Sarah E. Schabow
 Robin Schoene
 Jen Sears
 Dena S. Sewell
 John G. Shebel
 Janet Timms
 Alyse M. Vesely
 Tracey Ward
 Wendy A. West
 Blake D. Wilburn
 Dacia Woolf
 Sheila M. Zeytinoglu

ELECTION THANK YOU

The mid-term elections are over. We have had substantial changes at the federal, state and local levels.

None of this happened by accident. Our involvement started right after the New Year as we organized to set up the committees which would make endorsement recommendations. At the MSTTA level, we had a mini-convention in May designed to give all of the major candidates a chance to speak to our state endorsement groups.

At the local level, we organized endorsement committees to meet with all announced local candidates who chose to participate in the process.

All of this took time and a great deal of effort on behalf of our members. As Election Day approached, we shifted into high gear with leaflet delivery committees, letter writing, phone banks and ultimately with sign posting and Election Day phone reminders.

The evening of November 6, teams fanned out from TAAAC Headquarters to put up large blow ups of the Apple Ballot.

Because our Apple Ballot was genuinely bi-partisan this year we had groups from both major parties interested in handing out our Apple Ballot.

There were several outstanding efforts by TAAAC members. Ken Baughman outdid himself when he bought and cut to measure several hundred stakes which we then pounded into the ground. Once in the ground, our teams then stapled the large Apple Ballots to the stakes. Bill Jones, Mike, Sarah and Jessica gave new meaning to the term "multi-tasking." Sheila Finlayson did double duty, at one point running our phone bank and then later in the campaign she and Yolie Marshall put up signs in the middle of the night in the wilds of Crofton. Cheryl Menke and friends did a great job in District 30 with signs and literature drops. Ron and Anne Russell deserve special mention for all they do all of the time. January 2007 marks the last time they will be lobbying for TAAAC. They have organized and lead our lobbying efforts almost since the beginning of time. On a day to day basis during this election season they were every where. When you see them lobbying this legislative season, please take the time to thank them for what they have done.

Because of the great efforts by a lot of people, I know that I may well have missed some of you and for that I apologize; all in all it was a magnificent effort by members and staff.

Congratulations to one and all for a job well done.

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **Secretary-Treasurer, Board of Directors, NEA Delegates, and MSTA "Fund for Children and Public Education" Representative.**

Nomination forms are due at the TAAAC office by 5:30 p.m. on January 16, 2007.

Name _____

Home Address _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (S) _____

I would like to place my name in nomination for the following position(s):

- Secretary-Treasurer
- Board of Director
- NEA Delegate

TAX PREPARATION

R. J. Pellicoro & Associates is now accepting appointments for tax preparation at the TAAAC office on the following dates:

Monday, February 19	8 AM – 2 PM
Thursday, February 20	2 PM – 7 PM
Tuesday, February 27	2 PM – 7 PM
Thursday, March 8	3 PM – 7 PM
Monday, March 12	3 PM – 7 PM

Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Spend Summer in the Sun

DRD Pool Service Inc. is accepting applications for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors and swimming pool managers. No Experience Necessary – Free Training. For more information, call Noelle Navarro at 410-923-7665, 1-888-785-7665 or email to:

n_navarro@drdpools.com

BECOME A NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER!!!

There has never been a better time in Anne Arundel County to become a National Board Certified Teacher! Join the momentum in our county to become a NBCT!

National Board Certification is the highest credential a teacher can earn and a symbol of professional teaching excellence. It is a rigorous professional development process that includes writing, videotaping, and reflecting on your teaching practice. It attests to the fact that you have been judged by your peers as one who is accomplished in your field. National Board Certification:

- Recognizes achievement –both yours and your students
- Strengthens and reaffirms teaching strategies
- Adds credibility to the teaching profession
- Represents the profession's highest standards
- Positively impacts student learning

Today, nearly 50,000 teachers in the nation are National Board Certified. Anne Arundel County is second only to Montgomery County in the state for its number of NBCTS and candidates. NBCTS in Anne Arundel County earn \$4000 more every year!