

## From the President



Steve Courter

### TUSD: Ailing but Resilient

I cannot recall a time since I arrived in TUSD in 1992 that we have not been in some manner of crisis, with occasional breathing spells for a brief respite. These crises have almost always centered on money, although the attempted imposition of a contract in 1995

was more philosophical than financial as we fought to preserve collective bargaining. We prevailed after a very hard-fought battle that solidly united this Association.

Now we see the saddest time in recent TUSD history, the combined affects of many ills. First is the souring national economy, which has affected Arizona even more deeply than just about any other state. Second is our preexisting under-funding of public education, leaving little room for cutting spending without going right to the bone. Finally, education funding, a fundamentally political matter in any state, is tainted here by the ideological battle being waged between ultra-conservative Republican legislators and their more moderate colleagues (fewer in number than before). Then there are the Democrats, cut out of the action and more frustrated than ever.

Another ingredient to this putrid mix: statements by State Superintendent of Instruction Tom Horne and various legislators alleging that districts across Arizona are over-reacting to the 2010 education budget proposals from the chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Perhaps, but until those noxious proposals are repudiated by the majority and taken off the table for good, and a responsible budget is passed, it is difficult to make a case for districts at the mercy of these ideological zealots to ignore the potential for incalculable harm to our already cash-strapped public schools.

Then there is the governor, whose public statements have shown a glimmer of recognition of the limits of merely slashing our way out of this budget deficit, espe-

**See President p.4**

## Summer Schedule/ Appointments



Summer hours for TEA will be 7:45 AM – 4:00 PM June 10th-July 6th and 7:45 AM – 4:45 PM during the rest of the summer break. The office will be closed for Memorial Day on May 25th and Independence Day on July 3rd.



Due to vacation and individual schedules, the office may be closed 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM or may close early, if necessary. If you need to speak with an officer or your UniServ Director, *please call the office first,*

795-8870, to ensure his/her availability and/or to set an appointment.

*Please note: if you need to deliver anything when the office is closed, there is a mail drop by the front door.*

## FYI...

### Contact Information

Please ensure that we have your most current home address and email so you can continue to receive communications over the summer regarding negotiations or other important matters. Simply email [laurie.damiani@arizonaaea.org](mailto:laurie.damiani@arizonaaea.org) or call 795-8870. Since we're not connected to TUSD's system, please let us know if there are ANY changes to your employment status for 2009-2010: site transfer, bargaining unit, work hours, leave of absence, etc. If you'll be on a leave of absence or have unfortunately been RIFed or laid off, please inquire about how to maintain full membership benefits at a reduced rate.

**See FYI p.3**

### In this issue:

Vice President .....	p.2
Dues Structure .....	p.2
AEA Special Assessment .....	p.2
Conferences .....	p.3

## From the Vice President

Luci Messing

May is already here and we can see the end of the school year quickly approaching. I know we'll all be ready for summer break!

Many new business items or resolutions introduced at the AEA Delegate Assembly by TEA passed. Individuals speaking on behalf of TEA did a fine job. I want to thank the delegates for giving their time and for participating in this important activity. We had many first-time delegates who were pros by the end of the weekend. They represented our membership well.

**March4Schools** was a phenomenal success! Approximately 10,000 people descended on the Capitol Wednesday, March 4th. The Arizona Education Association was joined by several coalitions which helped to make this activity an historic event. Over 50 individuals attended and represented our association. They met with legislators, sat in on committee hearings, had lunch with a legislator, and rallied with thousands of other pro-education demonstrators. I was invited to address the entire group and it was extremely inspiring to view the crowd from the stage. Special thanks to **Brandi Kitzberger** and **Beth Slaine** for their organizing efforts on behalf of TEA.

We have used **March4Schools** as a springboard to continue our pressure on the Governor and our elected officials. Another lobbying day was held May 13th. RIFed members joined us so they could dialogue face-to-face with their representatives. We also picketed at the Governor's Office (400 W. Congress) on Tuesday, May 5th. We thought this was an appropriate activity for Teacher Appreciation Day. Decisions are being made that will impact the future of public education. Continue to write and call the Governor (800-253-0883 or <http://azgovernor.gov/contact.asp>) and your representatives (800-352-8404). Tell them that public education cannot withstand any additional cuts to our classrooms.

There is still time to sign up with our Public Policy committee at [teapolyleg@gmail.com](mailto:teapolyleg@gmail.com) and receive updates and information about what's happening up at the Capitol or here in Tucson. Be part of the solution. Public education needs you now. Remember, if we give it our best effort then there will be no regrets. Act now.

A rally will be held May 14th at the Governor's Tucson office (Speedway and Campbell), from 4:30-6:00 PM. This will be the last one before school is out.

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## AEA Delegates Approved a New Assessment

Elected representatives to the AEA Delegate Assembly voted during the annual meeting April 24-25 on a special assessment called "Every Member Option," which will be collected with the regular dues. This assessment will be for AEA's Foundation for Teaching and Learning, Fund for Public Education, and for the Education Improvement Fund. The assessment is set at \$12 for full-time certified and ESP members and \$6.00 for less than half-time members. This calculates to an additional 60 cents per pay period for a full-time member. A special publication from TEA will be arriving soon explaining the assessment and how to opt out of it, if you so choose. In addition, AEA will publish information about it in the AEA Advocate and will send letters to members in June. (Please see the FYI item "Contact Information" regarding the importance of updating your home and email addresses.)

## From the Executive Director

Pernela Jones

### Dues: The Basics

From time to time, members ask about how dues deductions are determined. Association dues are determined by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Tucson, Arizona, and National Education Associations. (*Remember that dues for professional organizations such as ours are tax-deductible for those who itemize on their IRS returns.*)

#### Certified

- TEA\*: 1/2 of 1% (.005) of the beginning contract salary for certified employees.
- AEA: 1% of the state average beginning certified salary.
- NEA: .00225 of the national average annual teacher salary.

#### ESP (Education Support Professionals)

- TEA\*: 1/2 of 1% (.005) of the base annual salary rate of ESP grade 1, step 1.
- AEA: 1/2 of certified dues.
- NEA: .00225 of the national average annual ESP salary.

Dues are deducted during TUSD's regular 20 pay periods only. (Dues are pro-rated based on part-time status.) Since negotiations are pending, there will be no change to TEA dues. However, since the state and national dues are based on a percentage of average salaries, together they will increase by 95 cents per pay period for certs and 65 cents for ESP.

In addition, some members also contribute to the TEA Political Action Committee (TEAPAC), AEA Fund for Public Education, AEA Education Improvement Fund (EIF) and/or the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. These political action committee and EIF dues are added to the Association dues deductions.

*\*The TEA Constitution and Bylaws includes a dues assessment for the Scholarship and Public Relations Funds (\$4 per cert and \$2 per ESP).*

• **Members Honored**

Congratulations to the 79 TEA members who are retiring from TUSD! Twenty-five took part in TEA's special Laurels Luncheon to honor retirees on Saturday, May 2nd. We wish you the best of luck in your new ventures.

Thanks to ARs **Debra Batten** (Vail), **Deb Esparza** (Hughes), and **Emily Freed** (Oyama), for acknowledging members at their sites who have shown support for RIFed employees. Their activities included reading news clippings with students, organizing "pink-out" rallies at their schools, participating in the rallies in front of the Governor's Tucson office, contacting the Governor and legislators, participating in TEA/AEA lobbying days, and being involved in the **March4Schools** event at the State Capitol.

On April 28th, **Carol Gaxiola** was one of two community members awarded the **Victim Voice of Courage Award**. She was honored, along with several others, during the Crime Victims' Rights Week Commemoration hosted by the County Attorney. Carol is a TEA Member at Menlo Park Elementary School.

**Jeremy Harkin**, TEA member at Sahuaro High School, was recognized in the Arizona Daily Star on April 30th, the same day his first movie, "Ockham's Razor (With Scrambled Eggs)," debuted at the Loft Cinema. Earnings from the movie were slated to go to the Loft and to the Interfaith Coalition for the Homeless. Jeremy is known for raising money for local charities through his foundation, Swim for Cures, swimforcures.com.

• **Updates on Web**

Please check the TEA website, [www.TucsonEA.org](http://www.TucsonEA.org), for updates about involuntary transfers and RIFs/layoffs, as well as negotiations.

• **TEA Resignation Notification**

Although membership always pays, if for some reason you wish to drop your membership, you must do so in writing no later than August 1st.

• **Conferences**

TEA plans to sponsor several members for conferences over the summer. (See below for a description of each.)

If you are interested in participating in either conference and/or would like to learn more about being considered for TEA sponsorship, you must submit a written request to TEA President-Elect Luci Messing as soon as possible, **but no later than the dates listed for each conference**. You can send your request via District mail, US mail, or email to [Luci.Messing@arizonaaea.org](mailto:Luci.Messing@arizonaaea.org) with the subject line "**Conference sponsorship.**" (For general information about the conferences, you can call Luci at 795-8870.)

Include your name, site, position, reason for wanting to attend the conference and a brief statement indicating a willingness to participate in future Association activities related to the topics of the conference. Attendees who are selected will provide a brief report to the TEA president and/or present briefly to the Board of Directors within a month of the conference. Preference will be given to currently active members.

**Joint Conference on the Concerns of Minorities and Women request due May 15th:** This conference will take place June 28-29, 2009 in San Diego, at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, directly preceding the NEA Representative Assembly. A variety of Learning Labs offer opportunities for exchange of views and information on numerous topics. All sponsored registrations will be done through the TEA office based on the approval of President-Elect Luci Messing.

**AEA Leaders Conference request due June 5th:** The Annual AEA Summer Leaders Conference will take place at the Wigwam Resort from July 14-16, 2009. It's an excellent opportunity to receive training on various aspects of the AEA, current education-related topics, building a strong local, and avenues for participation in your Association!!





Tucson Education Association

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## **President** (cont. from p.1)

cially at the expense of education and the safety net that keeps the recession's unfortunate victims from completely slipping through the cracks. Despite this dawning understanding by Governor Brewer that the extremists in her party are leading Arizona into the abyss, she has not put out her own budget proposal.

We must all become political activists now, for the benefit of the employees who are being RIFed, laid-off, or having their hours slashed, and to save programs that are being eliminated or effectively truncated, as well as to avoid the likelihood of larger class sizes and fewer elective offerings. The apolitical among us are learning the essential truth that ours is the most political of all professions, where everything from pay to regulations to working conditions are entirely or largely political decisions.

The worst is seeing our teachers, support professionals, and students get caught in this torpid mess. I am reasonably, cautiously, optimistic that much of the planning for the worst-case scenarios will be reversed in time for the next school year. In the meantime, lives are disrupted, morale is further lowered, and the demands on all of us increase.

I invite and urge you to join in every way you can in the struggle to turn this state's priorities around. Even in the midst of this recession, we can have responsible budget policies. Together, we can and will prevail.

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