

## From the President



Luci Messing

### Failure of the Override: Where do we go from here?

While this is not the outcome that we worked so hard for, it is nevertheless, the hand that we have been dealt. So, how might we continue our efforts to have a positive impact on our professional working conditions? Despite this setback, there is still work to be done in addressing the lack of K-12 funding and the necessity to repeal the new state policies targeting teachers.

First, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many TEA members who gave of their time, money, and of themselves on behalf of the override. Although we did have widespread support across the District, unfortunately, we couldn't overcome a number of factors.

If we had been able to register our parents to vote and get them to the polls, and if the economy was not so bleak, and if TUSD was not such a continuous target, then perhaps we might have pulled this off. Our time will come.

Let us look at areas that we can address. We must focus on attracting and retaining students in the Tucson Unified School District. The revenue enhancement to the District would be substantial if we can bring back our students who live within TUSD boundaries but do not attend our schools. How might we go about this?

- We need to expand the successful programs that currently exist.
- We need to create positive, collaborative first choice schools.
- We need to address parent and community concerns regarding TUSD.
- We must tackle head on the issue of charter schools.

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## TEA Members

**Carol Gaxiola**, Menlo Park: Tu Nidito Children's Services presented Ms. Gaxiola with one of the five top marvelous moms of the year award.

**Jeremy Harkin**, Sahuaro: The Arizona Daily Star selected Mr. Harkin as Man of the Year as part of its "40 Under 40" recognition breakfast.

**Robert "Mike" Schmidt**, University: Mr. Schmidt was selected in July as one of seven finalists from the United States for the Teachers in Space project, which trains finalists to fly on suborbital spacecraft.

*Editor's note: If you know of a TEA member who has won an award or has otherwise been recognized, please email the information to [Pernela.Jones@arizonaea.org](mailto:Pernela.Jones@arizonaea.org) with the **subject line: member recognition**.*

## Member Testimonial

### TEA Support through Recall Process

Hi, my name is Jennifer Wemmer, and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Oyama Elementary School. For the past two years I have been affected by TUSD's Reduction in Force (RIF). In April of 2008, at the end of my first year of teaching, I received news about the Reduction in Force. I was formally let go, then called back before the end of the year, to my same position as a Kindergarten teacher at Soleng Tom Elementary School. This year, however, the RIF process was very different with a very

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## From the Vice President

Marivel Roybal

### Taking the Next Step in Technology, Membership & PD

#### Website

We have been working towards a new look for the TEA website! Go to [www.tucsonea.org](http://www.tucsonea.org) and click on the link at the end of the section "**Members Only Website.**" This site is our members only page. When you click on a link or document, you will then be prompted to Create your Account. Fill in all the required fields and click on the JOIN button at the bottom of the page. The TEA office will approve members. Then, you will be able to read all of the information that is posted. Information will be updated as needed. Please make sure to check back every week for new information, for example: a weekly message from the President, pictures of members in action, testimonials by members, etc.

For help with using this new members only site, please use the following link to help guide you through "**What Is A Groupsite – Tour,**" <http://www.groupsite.com/tour>, or go to the Featured Discussion area towards the bottom of the new TEA web page.

#### Membership

Recruiting, recruiting and more recruiting! November is the month of high school visits. TEA leaders and staff have been at Rincon (11/5), Pueblo (11/10), and Catalina (11/12), and are scheduled to visit Santa Rita (11/17), Sahuaro (11/19) and Palo Verde (11/24). We look forward to speaking with everyone we meet at each site. Remember, when you recruit a new member, return the membership form to the TEA office through district mail or drop it off. As a recruiter, you will receive a \$10 gift card to Target, as well as being entered into our monthly drawing.

#### Professional Development

On December 5th and 12th, TEA will host the professional development class "AEPA Early Childhood Study Group," facilitated by Maga Granberry. This study group is a chance for those of you who are in need of taking the AEPA assessment for this certification. Be on the lookout for flyers coming soon to your building or personal electronic inbox. Cathy Paredes will be conducting an American Sign Language 1 class on January 23 and 30, 2010, a prerequisite for the second American Sign Language class for beginners that will take place on February 13th and 20th. In order to sign up for one or all of these classes, go to the TUSD portal at <https://tucson.truenorthlogic.com/>. Besides signing up on the portal, please send in the RSVP form at the bottom of each professional development flyer to the TEA office. If you are interested in teaching a class sponsored by TEA, contact me at [marivel.roybal@arizonaea.org](mailto:marivel.roybal@arizonaea.org).

## We Were There

by Tommy L. Jones, UniServ Director

The voters have spoken regarding Propositions 401 and 402, thus rejecting TUSD's attempt to restore the funding that has been severely cut from the education budget by the Arizona State Legislature. In this state, voters can vote to override Legislature-imposed spending limits by up to ten percent (10%). The TUSD Governing Board voted in June to ask the voters in this school district for a seven percent (7%) override which would have remained in effect for seven years, but was defeated despite a valiant effort by TEA members.

TEA opened its office doors and encouraged many members to walk neighborhoods, participate in phone banking and distribute tons of important literature. We understood that property taxes are used to fund overrides and realized that the economy is not where it needs to be but our main focus was TUSD's students. All-day kinder, much needed technology upgrades and improved access to technology will not be realized as a result of this defeat, severely hurting the instructional process.

TUSD has been the only local school district operating without an override and it is a fact that local districts have relied on overrides to offset the low state funding just to survive. TUSD's budget will be hit harder than the districts with voter approved overrides, and this is fact. Our community needs quality public schools in order to attract and retain well-paying jobs and to protect neighborhood property values. We missed a golden opportunity to catapult Tucson into a major economic power for years to come.

My hat goes off to TEA, its members and families; you did your part despite not receiving some of the gains that you genuinely deserve. I am proud of the entire campaign and it was a pleasure to work with such dedicated individuals. We worked for Tucson's children and we have no need to hang our heads.

WE WERE THERE!

## TEAPAC Steering Committee



*Correction from October Newsletter.* The newly-elected TEAPAC Steering Committee members are **Jay Adkins, Jason Freed, Bob Jones, and Barbara Reed.** They join **Luci Messing, Rosalva Meza, and Tony Vacura.**

## Evaluation Problems? Possible Discipline?

by Peggy Street, UniServ Director

When faced with evaluation problems or possible discipline, call the TEA office immediately.

It all began in the spring of 2009 after the horrific legislative session that seemed to have but one objective – destroy public education in Arizona! All of us have to live with the results of what happened to public education, and the results appear to be manifesting themselves in more work for all. To a person, everyone is overworked; supplies and materials are at an all-time low, and more is being asked of teachers and support personnel. Career teachers and career ESP are finding themselves, for the first time in their careers, involved in disciplinary actions or with unsatisfactory evaluations. Many are embarrassed and do not ask the Association Representative at the site for assistance. However, an email or telephone call to the TEA office will bring a member of the TEA staff of NEA-trained UniServ Directors to assist and represent the member.

Don't wait until a deadline has passed; at the first sign of a potential disciplinary action or if dissatisfied with an evaluation, contact the TEA office immediately. We are here for you, the member. We work for you and are prepared to represent you for all Consensus Agreement and White Collar/Food Service Agreement issues. So that you are always on the offensive, take a few minutes and review the appropriate agreement that pertains to your position. They are available on line and may be accessed through the TEA web site, [www.tucsonea.org](http://www.tucsonea.org). The TEA office telephone number is 795-8870 and the fax is 795-8942.

## NEA 2010 Regional Conference

The NEA Western Regional Leadership Conference (WRLC) will take place January 15-17, 2010 in Mesa, Arizona. The theme of this year's conference is "Today's NEA: Hope, Innovation, Transformation." The NEA WRLC is designed to further enhance knowledge of K-12 educators, support professionals, higher education, student and retired members.

The Western Region Minority Leadership Training (MLT) will be held immediately before the WRLC. This pre-conference training begins on Wednesday, January 13th and concludes on Friday, January 15th. The MLT is intended to attract and engage ethnic minorities in Association leadership.

TEA plans to sponsor six to ten members to attend the WRLC (and MLT, if eligible). If you are interested in being considered for TEA sponsorship to participate in the WRLC and/or the related MLT, you must submit a written request to TEA President Luci Messing as soon as possible, **but no later than December 1, 2009**. 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 more 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.

## FYI...

### • Agreements Ratified

TEA members ratified the Consensus and White Collar/Food Service Tentative Agreements on October 21st! Go to the TEA website, [www.tucsonea.org](http://www.tucsonea.org), to see related Bargaining Bulletins and the ratified proposed changes to the Agreements under "Negotiations."

### • American Ed Week/ESP Day

NEA's 88th annual American Education Week (AEW) will be celebrated **November 15–21** this year. NEA's annual tagline, **Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility**, reflects the Association's calling upon America to provide students with quality public schools so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century. **ESP (Education Support Professional) Day** is celebrated on the Wednesday of AEW, November 18th. For more information about how to celebrate the week and recognize ESP members, go to [www.nea.org/grants/19823.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/19823.htm).

### • Newsletter Contest

TEA's Public Relations Committee is sponsoring a contest to rename the TEA Newsletter to reflect the goals and purpose of the Association. Please submit your suggested ideas, along with a brief rationale, to Pernela Jones, editor, no later than December 1, 2009. (You can email [Pernela.Jones@arizonaaea.org](mailto:Pernela.Jones@arizonaaea.org) with the **subject line: Newsletter Title.**)

## President (cont. from p.1)

These strategies will require a commitment from the District and diligence on our part to make this happen. It can be and must be one of the main emphases for our association.

In addition, we will be putting into action our state-wide plan to repeal the appalling new state policies. Exactly what is at stake?

1. Districts are not allowed to use seniority (tenure) as a criterion for selecting teachers who are RIFed.
2. Districts are not required to maintain a priority list for recalling teachers who have been RIFed.
3. Districts may reduce teacher salaries in any manner at any time.
4. Districts are no longer required to issue teacher contracts by May 15th.
5. The April 15th date for teacher contract non-renewal is no longer required.
6. Compensated release time for association activities is prohibited.

We intend to work with central administration through the negotiations process to maintain the language that is not strictly prohibited. We will continue to organize our members to contact their legislators and the Governor to re-institute key employee rights. If ever there was a cause that we should band together on and work towards, this is it. This is why we must also recruit all potential members to join us because now is the time for a united front. Every member will be called upon to participate in the effort to protect our rights. We will not be silenced nor ignored.

You will be receiving information regarding this issue through my weekly updates and on the website. Make the time to be informed and to discuss these issues with colleagues. This will take all of us being involved. Remember, together we are stronger.



## Office Schedule & Appointments

The TEA office hours are 8:00 AM to 4:45 PM and is closed during TUSD holiday breaks. Due to individual schedules, the office may be closed on occasion at other times. If you need to speak with an officer or your UniServ Director, *please call the office first, 795-8870*, to verify a person's availability and/or to set an appointment to meet.

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

## Testimonial (cont. from p.1)

different outcome. I was completely let go from the District and told I might not have a job the following year. My name was pretty far down on the recall list, being a second year teacher. I was very discouraged and worried about where my career was going. Was I going to be called back? And if I am, when and to where?

During this time, TEA was extremely helpful. They held information and question forums, which proved to be very helpful. I went to almost all of them! After leaving those meetings sometimes I would feel pessimistic that I would not be called back, yet on the other hand hopeful, because I saw how TEA advocated for us with such passion and commitment.

Throughout the summer, I waited and waited to get "the call" from TUSD Human Resources. Finally, at the end of July, I received a phone call and was offered a position to teach Kindergarten.

Going through this whole process has been a very trying experience in many different ways. I do feel though, that everything happens for a reason and I am so happy to be teaching and doing what I LOVE.

Proud to be a TEA member, Jennifer Wemmer, Oyama.



**Tucson Area Chapter of AEA-Retired Meeting  
Tuesday, November 17, 2009, 10:00 AM  
AEA Southern Region, 6873 N. Oracle Rd.**