

Inkwell

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Issue 5

Questions and Answers for The ECAE President

Ron "Duff" Martin

Why union work? People get involved in organizations for any number of reasons, but I think having a mom involved in her support staff union at the school she worked at while I was a young child inspired me to want to serve my colleagues just as my mother did. I also got involved because I was asked to. Jo Burke, my predecessor kept encouraging me until I finally gave in—and I'm glad I did.

What has been your fondest memory of union work? I really enjoy the NEA Representative Assemblies. Once I got a chance to hear Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama all at one RA. At that same RA I met seven of the nine from the Little Rock Nine. I just enjoy seeing our association at work on a much larger scale, knowing there are thousands of teachers all across this nation who come together for the same purpose—to work to maintain and improve working conditions and welfare of teachers.

You took over as president during a challenging time. So far what has been your biggest challenge? The learning curve has been incredible. Thank goodness I've had a good mentor and have been involved on the executive board for the past seven years. This has allowed me to have a better understanding of ECAE's history as well as having the ability to move our association forward. The hardest part has been being a full-time teacher and full-time union president, some days are long, very long.

The next bargain will no doubt be one of the most difficult bargains this association has ever participated in. What role do you play in the bargain? Gretchen Beckstrom serves as our negotiations chair and has an outstanding team representing all levels. That being said, my job is to represent the entire membership in the bargain. The negotiations team will do the hard work, and I will serve as an advisor stepping in only when they need my advice or suggestions. There is a good process for bargaining that has existed in this district long before most of us were teaching. Often times people would like to speed up the process and get it done, but that is not the responsible thing to do. The bargain takes time and involves careful deliberation and discussions.

How long have you been teaching, and what have you taught? My involvement in education is as varied as my involvement in the union! This is my 17th year. I was hired to work with at-risk kids at South Middle School when the state still had money. So I've enjoyed teaching 7th and 8th grade. I also worked at the off-campus school for a number of years with high school aged youth. That was an incredible experience I really enjoyed. I have experiences at the elementary level as well. Prior to teaching I really enjoyed my job at a local church as the director of youth and family ministries.

Where do you see the association in the future? This association will always be bigger than any one of us and I believe it will be around for a long time, at least I hope so. I look forward to leading this association as long as the membership wants me to. I love teaching and I love union work. I know every decision that is made will not be popular with 100% of the membership. That is hard for me, because I want everyone to be happy—but realistically I know that just isn't the case. Every decision this association makes is what we like to call decisions made for the greater good! That is my goal as your president—to keep the membership at the forefront and to look out for the greater good! I enjoy my union work.

So, you taught full-time and have done union work full-time. How has that been? A challenge. Some days are longer than others. I appreciate all the support and encouragement I've received from the membership. I appreciate South and how flexible my team of teachers and the administration has been. I really appreciate Bonnie McCombs, at the office—she has really helped me in the transition period. We hired Carol Miller, a retired secondary clerk-typist from Memorial High School and that has been a great addition—we have accomplished so much in such short time.

Speaking of accomplishments, name the top three changes or accomplishments. I would say cleaning up the membership data base has been the biggest accomplishment—of course it is a work in progress. The second accomplishment is changing the format of the building representative meetings. We start the meeting with committee meetings. This is new for the membership, but it encourages greater involvement from our members. A major goal for the executive board is to "grow leadership," and this is just one of the ways we are attempting to do this. I strongly encourage members to become involved—it is your association and your voice is important. And the third top accomplishment is working to be more collaborative with building representatives and central office people—it is important that we work together to deal with issues that affect our membership. This doesn't mean always agreeing.

Any last comments? I am so honored to serve such an outstanding group of professional people! I wish the community could see how hard the teachers of this district work, and what they do to contribute to this great community. If members have questions or comments I am hoping they will contact me—I promise I will get back in a timely fashion. I also want the membership to know that I will do my best to represent them.



Important Dates:

- 01/01 New Year's Day
- 01/01-31 National Mentoring Month
- 01/05 BOE Mtg.
- 01/19 BOE Mtg.
- 01/19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 01/26 Chinese New Year
- 01/28 BR Meeting



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In Go Long! and Kickoff, NFL stars Tiki and Ronde Barber reach out to middle school readers with their inspiring tales of life on and off the playing field.



NEA's Read Across America—Building a Nation of Readers January is National Mentoring Month

Tip of the Month: Literacy projects are a great way teens can earn community service credits and share their love of reading with younger students. For examples and ideas, check out the list of Youth Leaders for Literacy Grant winners at www.nea.org/readacross.

Link of the Month: Looking for lesson plans on your favorite books or topics? Go to www.readwritethink.org, a joint project of the National Council of Teachers of English and The International Reading Association. You'll find lesson plans, standards and student materials.

Special Days in January:

January: National Mentoring Month — www.mentoring.org
January 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 26 Chinese New Year

Read Across America
www.nea.org/readacross

Activity of the Month: Pledge, Pledge, Pledge. NEA's Read Across America wants to know your plans for Read Across America Day. Go to www.nea.org/readacross and fill out the pledge form. While you're there, find out what other schools and communities are doing for NEA's Read Across America Day. It's a great way to find new ideas.

Contract Information—Early Retirement

Duff Martin

Early Retirement (page 15 of the ECAE Contract). If you are considering the early retirement option, please take note of the following language from our contract:

"Any teacher retiring under this plan shall write a letter to the Superintendent no later than APRIL 1 of the last year of proposed regular employment expressing his/her intent to participate in the early retirement program. An exception may be approved by the superintendent and/or his/her designee in cases of provable emergency or extenuating circumstances."

Please contact our office (ECAE) if you have any questions. In March we will be offering a couple of retirement sessions. Please be watching the *Inkwell* for that information.



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Caught Smiling—December 2, 2008, during Meadowview's Deck The Halls.



If you recognize yourself in this photo email Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us on or before January 29, 2009, and you will receive a prize.

"Caught Smiling" will be a regular feature in the *Inkwell* this school year. Be sure to read your copy each month. Look for your smile and be a winner!



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ECAE's School Board Election Recommendation Process *Duff Martin*

Eau Claire's great schools did not become great by accident, and its quality cannot be maintained and improved without a strong, actively pro-education school board.

Each April elections are held for the Eau Claire School Board. The following process will be used to determine if ECAE takes an official position regarding our support for individuals seeking election. This process actually begins in January once candidates have filed their official notification that they are seeking election.

This procedure allows for each member to exercise his or her right to express your preference for candidates. As part of the ECAE's political action program, a joint committee of our PAC and Legislative Committee engage in interviewing declared candidates for the Eau Claire School Board. Individuals who are seeking election or re-election to the board are invited to be screened by this joint committee. Their responses to our questions are then provided to our members along with a committee recommendation and ballot. Every ECAE member is given the opportunity to cast a ballot showing preference for the candidates. Once the ballots are returned and counted the candidates who receive the highest number of votes receive the official recommendation of our association.

Documents containing the answers to the questions posed will be found in the teacher's lounges of your buildings. Exercise your right to be part of the official procedure. Remember you have a professional interest in these elections, because School Boards make decisions regarding our wages, hours and conditions of employment.

Contract Information—Transfers *Duff Martin*

Voluntary and Involuntary Transfers (page 39 of the ECAE Contract)

With looming budget cuts and potential layoffs it is important for ECAE members to know and understand voluntary and involuntary transfer language. "Should a transfer be necessary due to reduction of staff within a school or department, the following procedures shall be followed:

- a. Teachers within a building will be notified of the need to reduce the number of staff, and volunteers will be solicited.
- b. In the event there are no volunteers, a teacher or teachers will be considered by the principal for involuntary transfer.
- c. In considering teachers for involuntary transfer, the principal shall consider the following criteria in the order they are listed: (1) certification, (2) programmatic need, (3) district seniority, and (4) building seniority.
- d. All proposed transfers will be reviewed by the Executive Director of Personnel before implementation.
- e. Any teacher affected by the proposed transfer will be informed in writing by the principal of the rationale used to make the decision.
- f. Decisions felt to be arbitrary by the affected party may be appealed through the grievance procedure (see pages 34-37 of the ECAE Contract).
- g. Middle School teachers with grade 1-8 certification will not be involuntarily reassigned to a different grade level/subject area more than two (2) times in a four year period.
- h. All presently employed teachers shall be given their prospective schedules for the following year by June 1. Teachers will not be involuntarily transferred or reassigned (new certification area) after June 1 without their approval.
- i. Displaced teachers will be placed in a vacant position for which they are certified and qualified before any new teachers are hired. If there are not enough vacant positions available, then the contractual layoff procedure would apply."

Please contact our office (ECAE) if you have any questions.



**"Some of the secret joys of living are not found by rushing from point A to point B, but by inventing some imaginary letters along the way."
~ Douglas Pagels,
*These Are the Gifts I'd Like to Give to You***



**"We need to restore the full meaning of that old word, *duty*. It is the other side of rights."
~ Pearl Buck**

**"There is no security on this earth; there is only opportunity."
~ Douglas MacArthur**

**"The great opportunity is where you are. Do not despise your own place and hour. Every place is under the stars, every place is the center of the world."
~ John Burroughs**



Bargain Update

Gretchen Beckstrom

The results of the negotiations survey are in. We received 500 responses, so we feel we have a fairly good representation of what our members see as important. Your building rep has a copy of the breakdown of the individual responses. In general, we learned that our priorities are to maintain our present level of health insurance (with a district-funded HRA), to negotiate/establish a sick leave bank, maintain or improve retirement benefits, to re-structure the salary schedule to keep pace with our comparable school districts, and to negotiate the impact of staff reductions. Obviously, we want to prevent reductions. This was clearly reflected in the survey showing concerns about class sizes, teaching sections and overall class "load limits." In addition to the survey, we received 150 comments and additional emails with ideas, questions and suggestions. This input is valued and is used to inform the negotiations team about how to proceed with the bargain.

Understandably, the stress level is high given the state of the economy at all levels. The team met in December to craft our proposals based on your input. We are trying to be sensitive to the financial climate and the perception of the general public in the Eau Claire community. We are currently enjoying a better reputation than the administration and also realize that can quickly change. We continue to gather information that can help us understand the financial position of the BOE.

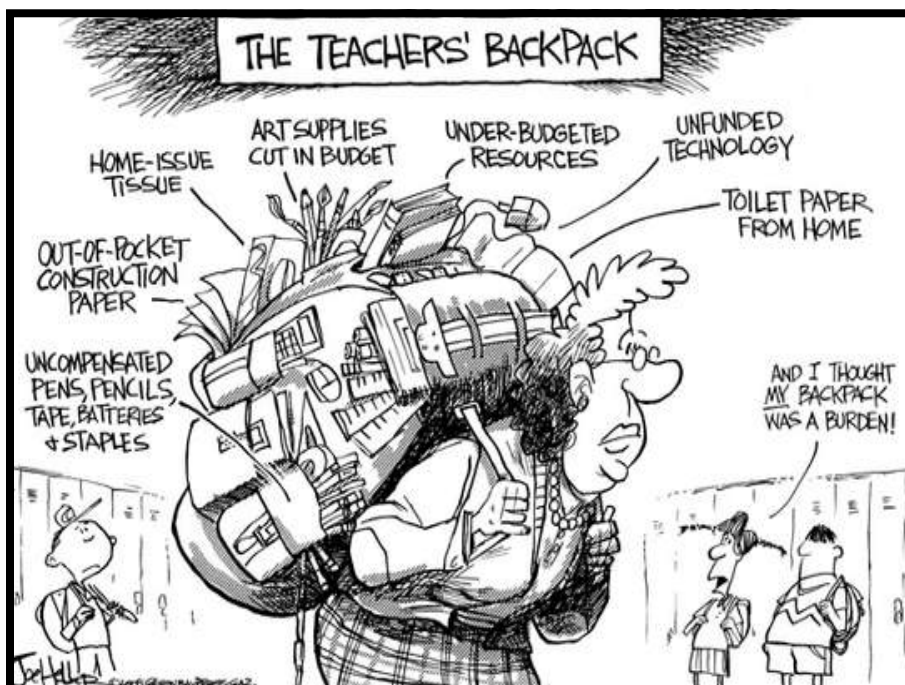
We are also interested to see what direction the new legislature will take when they reconvene this month in Madison. This will also impact our bargaining strategies. We appreciate your support and trust to allow the process of the bargain to run its course. Thankfully, we have a very creative team that may help find a way to improve our profession and our goals of doing what is best for educating kids. We will continue to keep the avenues of communication open and will update you regularly both through building reps and the Inkwell. We expect to meet with the BOE in the coming weeks.

Lane Change Information

Jeanne Rowe

Anyone who feels they will qualify for a lane change for second semester must call Jeanne Rowe in Personnel by January 23, 2009. This is the last date to apply for lane changes. We are still going on the basis of trust, where you call and Jeanne will verify. This will allow the lane change to be processed, and you can send the transcripts as soon as you are able. If you call with your information by January 23rd, you will not miss the lane change. Lane changes will be in effect the first pay period in the second semester.

You can reach Jeanne Rowe in Personnel at extension 1-3054. The last day to call is January 23rd.



“When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then for that is just place and time that the tide will turn.”

~Harriet Beecher Stowe

Each month, we will attempt to provide our members with data, historical perspectives or a quick “Did you Know ?” statement regarding negotiations.

In times of recession, the field of education tends to be one of the more stable professions. As people in the “business” or “service” community are “downsized,” there becomes a greater need for education as people gain additional training and skills in order to improve jobs and wages of all. Educators are a necessity for economic growth. Personal income is one of the best measurements of our economic health (WEAC 2006). We are all contributors to our community’s economic well-being. Salary matters.

Since the QEO (Qualified Economic Offer) went into effect in 1993, teacher’s salaries in Wisconsin have lost ground. In 1993, WI average teacher salaries were ranked 15th nationally and have dropped to 27th as of 2007. In addition, the average salary of Wisconsin teachers has fallen behind rates of inflation in every single year but one (in 1995 it remained equal) since the QEO has been imposed. This gives less buying power to educators in our state. The rising and out of control health care costs have also contributed to lower salaries, since salary increases have been essentially eaten up by the highest health care costs in the country.

We look to our legislators to address the problems of unfair school funding practices, health care reform, and comprehensive bargaining law reform.

Teacher Salary Benchmarks by Employer: 2003-04

Employer	BA Min.	BA 7th	BA Max.	MA Min.	MA 10th	MA Max.	Sch. Max.
Appleton	30,194	38,950	48,338	34,119	48,685	57,408	64,573
Beloit	28,936	33,823	33,823	33,493	46,127	53,616	59,666
Fond du Lac	31,086	34,489	34,489	35,126	50,150	54,126	61,311
Janesville	29,205	33,338	34,171	33,456	42,397	47,968	59,303
La Crosse	28,448	35,148	39,548	33,168	44,193	50,318	55,323
Oshkosh	29,030	35,996	47,606	33,675	45,798	56,016	61,216
Sheboygan	29,953	36,901	48,523	34,026	47,115	56,970	62,511
Stevens Point	29,984	35,766	35,766	35,981	51,213	51,213	61,453
Wausau	30,163	37,551	44,565	33,857	47,023	56,056	59,661
Wisconsin Rapids	30,092	38,057	39,252	34,761	48,928	48,928	56,887
Average:	29,709	36,002	40,608	34,166	47,163	53,262	60,190
Eau Claire	28,349	38,267	43,305	30,274	45,664	52,710	55,907
\$ Difference	-1,360	2,265	2,697	-3,892	-1,499	-552	-4,283
% Difference	-4.60%	6.30%	6.60%	-11.40%	-3.20%	-1.00%	-7.10%

Teacher Salary Benchmarks by Employer: 2007-08

Employer	BA Min	BA 7th	BA Max	MA Min	MA 10th	MA Max.	Sch Max
Appleton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beloit	31,389	36,691	36,691	36,333	50,037	58,161	66,691
Fond du Lac	33,964	36,044	36,044	40,727	54,487	58,641	66,523
Janesville	32,197	36,776	37,539	36,770	47,266	54,263	65,888
La Crosse	31,764	36,204	36,204	41,739	52,809	52,809	59,059
Oshkosh	31,899	39,556	51,041	37,003	50,328	60,692	68,042
Sheboygan	32,264	38,523	38,523	36,652	50,751	62,430	70,948
Stevens Point	33,748	40,254	40,254	40,497	57,640	57,640	69,167
Wausau	32,615	40,605	48,188	36,610	50,846	60,614	64,512
Wisconsin Rapids	33,095	41,855	44,907	38,230	55,971	55,971	65,083
Average:	32,548	38,501	41,043	38,285	52,237	57,913	66,213
Eau Claire	36,050	44,122	47,600	38,826	52,456	57,936	60,885
\$ Difference	3,502	5,621	6,557	541	219	23	-5,328
% Difference	10.80%	14.60%	16.00%	1.40%	0.40%	0.00%	-8.00%

Note: Appleton is not settled.

Cleaning closets or garages?
Looking for a bargain?

BARGAIN BLITZ

List your items in the
Inkwell Bargain Blitz!

Deadline for submitting materials is the **15th of each month**. Sorry, no personal ads.
Send items to Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

WANTED: Used alto saxophone in good condition. Email Sherri at smack@ecasd.k12.wi.us or call 831-9120.

WANTED: Both an electric and acoustic guitar for lessons conducted at McKinley Charter School. Amps and accessories are also welcome. Contact Pete Riley 852-6901.

SELL: Medela Breast Pump. Used for 3 babies. Asking \$100. Call Sandra at 874-5951 or email rskottz@wwt.net

SELL: House at 1917 Sierra Dr. S 4 bedroom, 4 Bath. For more information or questions call Denise @ 832-1369 between 3:30pm and 9:00pm. Or call Mike Tainter at Century 21, 828-3333.

RENT: Timeshare in Branson, MO 3 bedroom lockout. Biennia Week 20 at Palace View by Spinnaker. \$2,500. For more information or questions call Denise @ 832-1369 between 3:30pm and 9:00pm.

SELL: Stilhi Weed Cutter hardly used \$165. Wheelbarrow \$25. Mirrowed Swan Picture \$15. Round Duncan Phyfe Leather Inlay Lamp Table \$60. 2 Letterman Canvas Pictures 62 1/2 inches by 42 inches. 1 Deer and 1 Birds, \$45 each. New in box Milwaukee 12V Compact Driver \$120. Fisherman Table Lamp \$25. Tan Multi Colored Sofa Sleeper \$75. Many Formal Dresses Sizes 8-13/14 \$10-\$40. Brand New Bath & Body Winter Bag Sets with 8 oz. lotion, 10 oz shower gel, 8 oz. body splash, 10 oz. bubble bath, and mesh sponge (1 Japanese Cherry Blossom and 3 Sweet Pea Sets) \$45 each. For information or questions call Denise @ 832-1369 between 3:30pm and 9:00pm.

SELL: Privia PX-200 Keyboard. Very nice full-sized keyboard. Very good condition, \$700. Contact Tim or Rachel Scholze, 491-2990.

SELL: Washburn electric bass guitar with strap, hard and soft carrying case, extra set of strings, 200 watt amplifier, \$400. Email jvoltz@ecasd.k12.wi.us or call 715-834-3688.

Congratulations—National Board Certified Teachers!

Duff Martin

Two ECAE members were awarded National Board Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) on Tuesday (December 9, 2008). The teachers successfully submitted classroom-based videos of their teaching methods as well as details of their work in the community. National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) candidates also were tested in one of 25 selected categories such as science or math.

The two ECAE members were part of the 74 Wisconsin teachers certified by the NBPTS and the 9,600 teachers certified across the country this year. Congratulations to **Thersea Burzynski**, South Middle School, Eau Claire Area School District, Science/Early Adolescence and **Tricia Helms**, Lakeshore Elementary School, Eau Claire Area School District, Generalist/Early Childhood!

"The National Board Certification process is rigorous, well defined and thorough, and Wisconsin should be proud it has so many NBCTs in classrooms across the state. The certification shows teachers are dedicated to their work and want to take pride in that devotion by having it recognized nationally," WEAC President Mary Bell said.

According to the NBPTS, the National Research Council found that National Board Certification positively impacts student achievement, teacher retention and professional development. The NRC found that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by teachers who have not applied and those who did not achieve certification.

Wisconsin now has 589 NBCTs, according to the NBPTS. NBCT candidates go through 200 to 400 hours preparing for and completing the National Board Certification process. Teachers must have a college degree, three years of teaching experience and be licensed to be eligible for the certification. Certification lasts for ten years, and certified teachers must re-apply for the designation.

Wisconsin teachers receive reimbursement, up to \$2,000, for the costs of seeking national certification and nine annual stipends of \$2,500 if they remain employed as educators. Those working in high-needs schools receive an annual stipend of \$5,000. High-needs schools are those in which 60 percent or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch.

**Calling All Photographers! Take photos of teachers in classrooms for the Inkwell.
Send to cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us.**