

Inkwell

Volume 2008-2009
Issue 6

GUILTY AS CHARGED!

Ron "Duff" Martin, President

We are so lucky here in Wisconsin that we are a collective bargaining state! In January I had the opportunity to participate in the NEA Midwest Leadership Conference and really got a chance to hear how unions throughout the Midwest struggle to keep members. That is such a foreign concept to associations here in Wisconsin, and I believe we are very lucky that we are not a right to work state.

Of course there are misleading ad campaigns that incorrectly accuse teacher union leaders of irresponsible education spending. These kinds of ads are part of a broader attack on the union movement, which has helped to improve the lives of Americans over the years.

If speaking out against the overuse of student testing, trying to fix and get adequate funding for the so-called No Child Left Behind Act, fighting to stop the needless privatization of school services and striving to provide a high quality education for all children during a funding crisis are examples of blocking education reform, then I suppose school employee unions stand guilty as charged.

We many not have millions of dollars to spend on television, radio and news-paper ads, but because unions exist, millions more of us can live the American dream. Our story must be told so current and future workers, whether unionized or not, understand how unions have helped and what unions are poised to do for workers.

Starting in March—Read the *Inkwell* Online

Carole Galloy

At the January 28th Building Rep Meeting, it was unanimously decided that it is time to change the tools and technology we use to update the ECAE website. Our website is currently set up using Microsoft FrontPage. Beside the fact that this technology is not user-friendly, it is also no longer available, not even for updates.

Furthermore, in order to bring our association into the 21st century, beginning with the March issue, the *Inkwell* will be available exclusively online at our website. Therefore, this is the last *Inkwell* that will be printed and placed in your mailboxes at school. Each month you will receive notification when the *Inkwell* is published including the online link that will take you there. By publishing our newsletter online, ECAE will be saving over \$300 per month. That savings will cover the cost of the new technology in less than three months.

We will continue to print a few hard copies of the *Inkwell*, so if you prefer to have a printed copy of the newsletter sent to your home or your school, email Carol Miller at the ECAE office, millerc@weac.org, and we will happy to accommodate you.



Important Dates:

- 02/01-28 Black History Month
- 02/02 BOE Mtg.
- 02/04 Exec Board Mtg
- 02/09 BOE Mtg.
- 02/12 Lincoln's B'day
- 02/14 Valentine's Day
- 02/16 Presidents' Day
- 02/18 BR Meeting
- 02/22 Washington's Birthday



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Ashley Bryan won the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award for *Let It Shine*, a vibrant, cut paper celebration of three favorite spirituals created by African-American slaves. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, Simon & Schuster.
www.simonsayskids.com



NEA's Read Across America—Building a Nation of Readers February is Black History Month

Carole Galloy

Tip of the Month: Local sports teams are major league winners especially when it comes to reading, because many of them put literacy at the top of the community outreach efforts. Contact minor league, semi-pro, and even local college teams for guest readers.

Link of the Month: Join the 20th annual National African American Read-In. The event, held February 1 and 2, is sponsored by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English and the NCTE. For a Read-In packet, go to www.ncte.org/prog/readin/107901.htm.

Activity of the Month: Enter the "Breaking Barriers Essay Contest," sponsored by the Jackie Robinson Foundation, Major League Baseball, and the Scholastic Publishing. Students inspired by Major League Baseball hero Jackie Robinson can submit essays and win top prizes, including the chance to be honored at the All-Star Game. Go to http://mlb.mlb.com/molb/official_info/community/bb.jsp for more information.

February Literacy Dates:
February 1-31 Black History Month
February 1-2 African American Read-In

Read Across America
www.nea.org/readacross



http://inspirationsfromcinnamon.com/cat_in_hat_bs.JPG

Share your stories! Let me know what you do for Read Across America (day, week or month) with your students, in your classrooms, your media centers and/or school-wide activities. I want to keep records of ideas and activities. Also, take photos and send them to me so they can be included in future issues and also placed on our updated website.

Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

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Each Office Independently Owned & Operated

Caught Smiling At the October 15, 2008 Building Rep Meeting



If you recognize yourself in this photo email Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us on or before February 19, 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!

IMPORTANT TAX INFORMATION!

Dues for the 2008 Tax Year



\$642.08



WHAT IS THE FUND BALANCE?

Duff Martin

The fund balance is also called the Fund 10 Balance, or an account where a district takes your tax dollars that are supposed to be spent on educating children and hold them in school district accounts. It is the amount of revenue a school district accumulates over time by spending less than it receives in revenue.

The Eau Claire Area School District is **NOT** a bank. We shouldn't be letting our school district act like a bank. The function of a school district is to provide quality education for its students, not to save money.

Use the following information to fight common fund balance myths:

Myth: Districts need to build up their fund balances to make large purchases such as new buildings and renovations.

Reality: Districts are allowed to ask voters for bond and sinking fund millages for capital purchases. If voters do not support a project, the project should not occur. State aid should be reserved for operating expenses only.

Myth: Districts need to build up their rainy day funds in case the state cuts school funding.

Reality: If only this were true! In fact, most school districts try to cut wages and benefits when the state cuts funding, rather than dipping into their fund balances to maintain wages and benefits.

Many school districts are claiming they are broke and asking for large wage and health care concessions when they have money sitting in a fund balance account. It's safe to say that many schools can afford to pay employees or use some of the money they've banked for legitimate expenses to improve or maintain educational offerings.

I am willing to bet that most of our membership is not aware of the amount that exists in the district's Fund account. It currently sits at \$22,218,271.79—that was for 2007-2008, which is up from \$19,233,961.56 the previous year. Our district holds 21% in reserve which is above the state average of around 16%. Our school district is claiming it is broke, and they are asking for large wage concessions when they have money sitting in a fund balance account. It's safe to say that many schools can afford to pay employees or use some of the money they've banked for legitimate expenses to improve or maintain educational offerings.

Early Education in America

Carole Galloy

A**frican-American Teachers.** Daniel Alexander Payne, President of Wilberforce University in Ohio, was the first African-American college president in the United States. Born to free parents, Payne opened his own school at the age of 19. He wrote about educating himself and his students in his autobiography, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, c. 1830. Following is an excerpt:

"My first school consisted of three children, for each of whom I was paid fifty cents a month. I also taught three adult slaves at night, thus making my monthly income from teaching only three dollars...The next thing which arrested my attention was botany... Descriptive chemistry, natural philosophy, and descriptive astronomy followed in rapid succession... My researches in botany gave me a relish for zoology; but as I could never get hold of any work on this science I had to make books for myself. This I did by killing such insects, toads, snakes, young alligators, fishes, and young sharks as I could catch. I then cleaned and stuffed those that I could, and hung them upon the walls of my school-room."

Story continues on page 6—See **Early Education**



Black School Children During the Civil War Era.



The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) is a diverse, statewide coalition working for comprehensive school funding reform. To learn more about WAES, go to:

<http://www.excellentschools.org/index.html>



Miss Blanche Lamont and Montana Log School

Lafayette, Indiana, August 21, 1854

"And I must not forget the Schoolhouse which is a log house thirty-five by thirty with four windows & two doors. The cracks are filled with mud and plaster & there is no 'loft' & the shingles are very holey so that when it rains we take the books and stand in one place till it begins to drop down & then we move to an other spot & then an other."

Affectionately Yours,
M.M. Rogers

Excerpt from a letter written by Martha M. Rogers, a young female pioneer who headed West to teach.

<http://www.nea.org/home/11608.htm>

Contract Renewal and Retirement

Ron "Duff" Martin

midwinter signals contract renewal/non-renewal and retirement season for teachers. Individual teacher contract renewals and non-renewals are governed by Wisconsin State Statute 118.22. Under the law, Districts are required to notify teachers of possible non-renewal by February 28. In our District, notices of contract renewal will be given to teachers by March 15 and teachers must accept the contract renewal by April 15.

The non-renewal process has three components. First, the school district must send a written notice of non-renewal by February 28. The notice must contain information that the teacher has the right to a private conference with the School Board. Second, the Board must grant the private conference, if it is requested within 5 days of the notice of non-renewal. Third, the Board must vote to non-renew the individual contract and notify the teacher by March 15.

Contract renewals are to be returned to the District by April 15. If the District does not notify teachers of renewal by March 15, you may self-renew by sending a notice to the District stating "I hereby accept the renewal of my teaching contract for the 2009-2010 school year."

The non-renewal process is separate from layoff. Layoff procedures are subject to the terms of our master contract. You can find Layoff procedures on pages 37-40, under Article IX—Reduction in Work Force. Both non-renewals and layoffs can be difficult, traumatic experiences for the individuals and the District. Reductions in staff and dismissals are most likely to occur in the spring of the year as our district plans for next year. Know your rights under the contract. Know your seniority status in the district, as seniority often kicks in for layoff and transfer situations. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Ron Martin (martin@weac.org or 835-1916) or Mike Burke (burkem@weac.org or 835-1131).

Most teachers who intend to retire this year must meet the notification requirement under our master contract; this information can be found on pages 15-16. You must submit a letter no later than April 1 to the superintendent announcing your intention to participate in the early retirement option. This is separate from the WRS date timeline for accessing state retirement benefits.

Annual ECAE Legislative Banquet

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Ramada Inn Convention Center
205 S. Barstow Street
Eau Claire WI 54701

5:30-6:00 p.m. Registration and Cash Bar

6:00—7:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00—7:15 p.m. Welcome & Introductions
(Ron Martin)

7:15—8:15 p.m. Panel Discussion
(Invited State Leaders)

8:15—9:00 p.m. Questions

9:00 p.m. Adjourn

The first 80 members who make reservations will be the guests of ECAE for dinner. Reservations beyond 80 persons are \$22.00.

Contact Carol Miller at the ECAE office for reservations:
Email: miller@weac.org
Phone: 835-1916

DON'T MISS THIS

The Eau Claire Association
of Educators &
The Eau Claire Area
School District

Invite you to a
Retirement Informational Meeting

Monday, February 16, 2009
4:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Memorial High School Auditorium

&

Tuesday, February 17, 2009
4:00 to 5:00 p.m.
North High School Auditorium

And You Thought It Was Over! Critical Spring Elections

Duff Martin

Just when you thought elections were done, another round is underway. That's democracy. On April 7th, Eau Claire voters will elect school board members and fill local government offices. There are two other big races in the state, they are the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the Wisconsin State Superintendent elections.

The Supreme Court election is for the seat currently held by Wisconsin Supreme Court Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson. Chief Justice Abrahamson was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1976, then won election and then reelection in 1979, 1989, and 1999. Since 1996 she has served as Chief Justice. Chief Justice Abrahamson's term expires in July of this year, and she is running for reelection. WEAC has supported the Chief Justice in past elections.

The State Superintendent race is underway with five candidates, meaning there will be a primary on February 17th. Current State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster is not seeking reelection. Tony Evers, Deputy State Superintendent is seeking the seat, along with Rose Fernandez, Lowell Holtz, Van Mobley, and Todd Price. The WEAC Board of directors voted to support Tony Evers for this position. ECAE members will receive more information about the candidates through WEAC and ECAE communications in the near future.

All of these races are important to our membership and will have a very profound affect on public schools. Decisions made by the Supreme Court have had an impact on all aspects of education and on the people who work in public schools. The State Superintendent is a critical leader at the Department of Public Instruction and in the halls of the legislature. School board members make the policy and budgetary decisions that are critical at the local level.

You can get involved by helping to fund campaigns, donating your time, and most importantly, getting out the vote at the primary on February 17 and the general election on April 7. Mark those dates on your calendar! Bring your family and friends. Watch for more election information soon!

This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC and ECAE members, Federal Statute CFR 110.8(b)(4)

NEA Midwest Regional Conference

Carole Galloy

I was privileged to attend the NEA Midwest Regional Conference in Chicago IL, January 16-18, 2009, with Duff Martin. In my first meeting, Living Stress Free, I received tips on prioritizing my life, making time for myself and ways to relax body, mind and soul. There were sessions on dropout prevention, politics, and community partnerships, but I learned the most in the session on Read Across America. We caucused with other Wisconsin members facilitated by Mary Bell, President of WEAC. Mark Cebulski gave a heartwarming farewell speech, as his term is ending on the NEA Exec. Committee. Lily Eskelsen ended the conference with a talk about the politics of education. Wisconsin had the largest number of attendees. The conference raised over \$40,000 for the NEA Children's Fund. What a great weekend!



Mary Bell, President, WEAC

Mark Cebulski, NEA Exec. Committee

The Cat in the Hat

Lily Eskelsen, Vice Pres., NEA

Officers and members of the UW-Steven's Point Student WEAC.

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

SELL: USDA-inspected halves of corn-finished Holstein steers. Each steer is about 1,500 lbs live weight, dressing out to halves of 300-400 lbs. meat depending on desired cuts. Buyer can designate specific cuts of meat. \$500 per half, plus approximately \$200 wrapping costs. Contact Patty at pzwiefelhofer@ecasd.k12.wi.us

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

SELL: House conveniently located a block off of Stein Blvd. (south of Hamilton Ave.) at 937 Violet Ave. Bi-level built in 1992. New front door, roof, all upstairs flooring, kitchen counter, kitchen sink, some lighting and added a 14 foot by 22 foot brick patio walled on three sides in the back yard. Back yard has a perimeter chain link fence and a storage shed Three bedrooms, office, 2 full baths. Listed with Coldwell Bankers. \$179,900. email Lynda at ljohnson@ecasd.k12.wi.us.



SELL: Pictured above. Coffee table, 36" x 36" x 18" high, and two end tables, each 26 1/2" x 24" x 21" high. Beveled glass tops, metal scrolled frames with green patina finish. \$50 for all three. Email Carole at cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

WANTED: Cross-country skis, boots and poles to fit 2 children each approximately 80 pounds and youth size 5 shoe. May consider larger size(s) as well for future use. Contact Laura Sarauer at lsarauer@ecasd.k12.wi.us; 852-4152 (W) or 568-2676 (H).

Early Education—Continued from page 3

Female Teachers. Young women who staffed new schools often had to choose between marriage and teaching, since many states had laws barring married teachers. Eventually marriage became acceptable; but pregnancy was not. A teacher had to leave her job as soon as her condition showed—a practice that continued until the 1970s, when NEA won the fight to overrule mandatory leave for expectant teachers.

The Profession. A hundred years before the birth of NEA, education was largely informal—the main requirements for teaching were the ability to read, write, and stay out of trouble. By the mid-1800s, however, widespread education reforms had led to an emerging public school system and professional training for teachers.

Despite reforms, many teachers continued to work in lonely isolation in one-room schoolhouses with scanty teaching materials, uncertain public support, and salaries of less than \$100 a year—sometimes the "salary" was food and lodging.

Who would champion the nation's teachers? State education associations existed in 15 of the 31 states in the Union, but there was no national organization to serve as a single clear voice for America's teachers. Until one day in 1857, when 10 state associations sent out "The Call," an invitation to the nation's educators to unite.

Although membership in the new National Teachers Association (NTA) was restricted to "gentlemen," the two women who answered the call were made honorary members and permitted to sign the constitution. This restriction would last for nine years.

A Single Voice. Over the years, NEA has played an increasingly vital role in improving the conditions under which teachers work and children learn. In the turbulent 1960s, the historic merger of the NEA and the predominantly Black American Teachers Association promoted the human and civil rights of educators and students of all ethnicities.

Today, public schools guarantee every American child a free education, regardless of race or gender, religion or spoken language, social class or disability. And when this diverse group heads to school each morning, dedicated NEA members are there to teach, drive, feed, counsel, nurse—and inspire.

—<http://www.nea.org/home/11608.htm>

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