



Inkwell

Eau Claire Association of Educators



www.ecteachers.org

Volume 2009-2010

Issue 1

Affiliated with Wisconsin Education Association Council and National Education Association

WELCOME BACK!

Ron "Duff" Martin, ECAE President

For some odd reason I still get that same excited and anxious feeling I use to get as a kid days before school started. I remember the new clothes being set out and getting my new school supplies ready for the first day! Of course the first day of school for most kids is pretty exciting; generally kids like school. They enjoy spending time with their friends and I believe they enjoy learning and experiencing new things.

For us as educators, whether it be our fifteenth, thirtieth, or even our first year, there is still some excitement in that first day. I see it each year; the first day for staff is always an exciting day. Staff have the opportunity to catch up on each other's lives and what happened over the summer. For some it is an opportunity to try new lessons and activities that were learned during a summer course or workshop, or perhaps implementing a new curriculum or program.

Being excited and loving what we do is extremely important. The upbeat and positive attitude is contagious not only with our colleagues but with the young people we work with. It is so important that we continue to hold the high ground and do what we do best—work with young people!!

I understand it will be a challenge. There is less support available in the classroom, less money for supplies and staff development, we have been assigned more kids in a class or on a case load, each year it seems as if the young people come to us with greater needs and there is less time to spend on differentiation of the curriculum—and the list goes on. Our jobs have changed considerably; we are expected to do more with less.

But what remains consistent is that we don't have the choice of deciding which students we don't have to teach or do an assessment on because every child deserves a great public school. It is our job to make sure that happens, and when we do our job it is important for us to be recognized by our supervisors, administrators, and the Board of Education. The recognition has to be genuine and sincere.

Your association is hard at work making sure that happens. The bargaining team has been working long and arduous hours over the summer. Our goal is to keep you posted as often as we can. Your executive board is committed to the following two goals for the 2009-2010 year: (1) To bargain a fair contract, and (2) To facilitate improved working conditions. How do we do this? We are planning to continue improving our communications, empowering leadership, strengthen the Association Building Committees (ABC), train and strengthen the Building Representatives, job protection, and program protection.

It's going to be a great year because of dedicated people like you!

Enjoy!

Ronald E. Martin

Ron "Duff" Martin, president



Important Dates:

- 09/09 Exec. Board Meeting
- 09/16 BR Meeting and Training
- 09/21 First Day of Fall
- 09/28 BOE Meeting



Inside This Issue:

President's Message	1
Read Across America	2
Dealing With Illness	2
Free HealthWorks	2
Are You Hosting a Student Teacher?	2
Insurance Questions	2
A Letter to the Editor	3
Healthcare Reform	3
Life On ECAE Negotiations-Year 1	4
Membership/Savers' Club Card	4
New Teacher Orientation	5
Back to School	5
Bargain Blitz	6
Welcome New Teachers	6
Fair Share Payers	6



**The Bus Stop,
By Janet Morgan
Stoeke**

Join a group of elementary students as they wait with excitement for their favorite driver, the school bus driver.

Written and Illustrated by Janet Morgan Stoeke, Penguin Group (USA), www.penguin.com



NEA's Read Across America—Building a Nation of Readers September is Back to School Month

Carole Galloy

Tip of the Month: Children's books with math and science are a great way to teach the "FUNdamentals." Look for *The Grapes of Math* by Greg Tang or *Mathemattickles*, a collection of poetry and a math theme.

Link of the Month: Book Adventure is a free, web-based reading motivation program from Sylvan Learning for K-8 students and teachers, offering booklists and reading logs, plus tools to help teachers generate specialized reports for parents and create rewards for students. Go to www.bookadventure.com.

Activity of the Month: Back to school means back to reading for some of your students. To help students struggling from the summer slump, find books that grab their attention from true adventures to fun fantasies and mix in reader's theater to engage and involve them.

**Read Across America
www.nea.org/readacross**

"Dealing with Illness: Planning for the Next Pandemic"

Illnesses are inevitable in the daycare setting, but there are ways to control the spread of viruses. Join Gundersen Lutehran pediatrician Kelly Hodgson Kline, MD, as she presents a workshop on the H1N1 flu virus and other common illnesses such as head lice, strep throat, impetigo, pink eye, respiratory illness, vomiting and diarrhea. You'll learn about helpful infection control measures to prevent a pandemic at your daycare before it happens.

Sept. 22, 2009—6--7:30 p.m.
Northstar Middle School

Free!! Register by Sept. 8. Visit gundluth.org. Under Health Information, go to Classes/Support Groups and click "Dealing with Illness—Planning for the Next Pandemic." Questions? Contact Jennifer Peterson at 800-362-9567, ext. 53258 or email jlpeter2@gundluth.org.

Don't Forget About HealthWorks— Our Employee Assistance Program!

Services provided are: Health and Wellness, Stress Management, Marriage and Family, Relationships, Depression, Anxiety, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Grief and Bereavement, Legal Concerns, and Finance/Budgeting.

**This is free to all ECASD employees!!
You can contact HealthWorks at
715-838-3060 or 1-800-236-3060.**

**HealthWorks is a service of
Luther Midelfort-Mayo
Health System.**

Are You Hosting a Student Teacher?

Help your practicum student or student teacher take his/her first step into his or her professional career. Share with your future colleague the benefits of joining Student WEA for less than \$35*.

- Personal liability insurance (\$1M) while student teaching in your classroom (the same that teacher's have!)
- Online mini resume service for finding a job
- Rebate off of NEA dues as a first year teacher
- NEA Teacher Toolkit Access (free!)
- Access to Student WEA and WEAC Conferences, including WEAC Winter Academy
- On WEAC Savers Club Card for discounts nationwide
- And membership to your Statewide Professional Association

Encourage them to join! Online membership sign-up at www.weac.org/Student-WEA *State and National Dues are \$26. Local chapter fees vary. If you have questions, contact Duff Martin at martinr@weac.org or call 835-1926.

Insurance Questions & Concerns

It is not uncommon for a group to experience some issues during a change in insurance providers. While I've only received six calls, which means the transition from our past provider to the new provider has been relatively smooth, I want you to know exactly what to do if you have a question or a concern about any aspect of our insurance.

You should make two calls, one to Duff Martin and one to our insurance consultant. Why call two people? 1) Let Duff know, so he can keep the insurance committee posted on concerns we might be experiencing. 2) Call or Email Deb Svihovec, so she can help address your questions and concerns. Duff Martin Phone: 835-1916. Email: martinr@weac.org
Deb Svihovec Phone: 715-834-8318; Email: Debbie.Svihovec@associatedfinancialgroup.com

A Letter to the Editor

by Chris Hambuch-Boyle

Here is Chris Hambuch-Boyle's letter to the Leader Telegram that never was printed.

I recently read "Interest groups a factor in races...WEAC spent \$450K on Dexter." I need to tell my story. A couple of years ago, I decided to participate in a Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) lobby day in Madison. It is a day that allows people the opportunity to converse with legislators, most powerfully as a constituent of the legislator. As an Eau Claire Association of Educators (ECAE) member I am afforded the opportunity to catch a bus that scoops up people as it heads down to Madison. I joined people from Hudson, River Falls and Menomonie. I say "people" because everyone on the bus was not a teacher. As a 30 year veteran teacher, who has always voted but not declared to any political party I felt it time to explore and decide on how I could help to renew the message of what teachers do in the classroom every day and that communities need "great" public schools as an option for children and families. I was very concerned about public school funding and the budget cuts our district was forced to do to make ends meet. Presently, those cuts equal more than \$ 30,000,000.00. It just seemed to me that the quality of the Eau Claire Area School District was being threatened by these cuts. I was interested in asking my legislator in Madison about the bipartisan committee on school funding that Governor Doyle had engineered.

During my "lobby day" experience I did get a chance to visit my legislator in his office. I and a colleague walked in. My legislator looked at us and identified us as "WEAC". There was not much warmth or engagement. When I asked about the bipartisan committee and possible recommendations to start funding schools in a different way we were told that it was Doyle's committee. That was the extent of our conversation. I may have participated in approaching "my" legislator because WEAC gave me the opportunity but I would like him to know the order of my priorities:

1. The safety, health and education of my family/friends.
2. The safety, health and education of the families I serve as a public educator.
3. My profession
4. My affiliation with WEAC and NEA

I hope he notes that WEAC and NEA, although they do wonderful things for education, are fourth on my list. My experience with "my" legislator forced me to help change Madison. ECAE or WEAC or NEA has never asked me if I am a Republican or a Democrat. Kristen Dexter said it well...I don't always agree with her but I appreciate the fact that she is willing to listen and have a conversation about what I believe in. She can answer my questions.

There are millions of teachers, support staff, custodians and bus drivers in the United States, 3.2 million as members of NEA. We just want to be part of the conversation. ECAE, WEAC and NEA give us a voice. Listening and collaboration should depend on what is brought to the table. As a teacher, I know that is how learning takes place. I don't always agree with ECAE, WEAC or NEA, but I have learned to compromise and participate in the process. I want to thank Kristen for being proud that WEAC supported her. I would hope that anyone who was supported by a good teacher, support staff, custodian or bus driver would be proud. Amounts of money do help campaigns but those running for office need to remember that you are elected one vote at a time.

Why We Support HealthCare Reform

Duff Martin

Our health care system is unsustainable. If costs continue at their current rate they will soon exceed starting salaries for some teachers and create a situation where current levels of early retirement benefits become too expensive to maintain.

Don't believe that you will have sufficient individual protection if you can just make it out the door before your retirement benefits are changed. Why? In most cases benefits for early retirees are linked to those of active employees.

Custodians, food service, clericals and teaching assistants have health care costs already exceeding starting and top salaries. They are seeing increased numbers of part-time new hires that are ineligible for insurance. This not only shuts out school employees from health insurance, this will be used by employers to further diminish your benefits and take them away through interest arbitration.

What can you do? Call your congressperson and senator. Let them know you support health care reform that

- Provides universal coverage
- Eliminates insurance company discriminatory practices
- Lowers costs through a strong public option that competes with private insurers
- Finances reform by taxing those making more than \$300,000 per year
- Allows those who like their plans to keep them

Call Senators Kohl and Feingold toll free at 1-877-702-0976. Take action now!



A Message from GroupHealth

As a friendly reminder, you have until the end of October to complete all three steps of the ECASD wellness program. By completing the program, you will receive a total of \$50 In Eau Claire Chamber gift certificates in addition to continuing at a lowered health insurance premium!

We need 90% of all ECASE employees to complete all three steps or everyone's insurance premiums will increase.

"It's bizarre that the produce manager is more important to my children's health than the pediatrician."

-Meryl Streep

"Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon."

-Doug Larson

"My own prescription for health is less paperwork and more running barefoot through the grass."

-Leslie Grimmer



Ignorance is bliss.” Whoever came up with that expression must have negotiated a school district contract at some point in their life.

I remember a few years ago standing in the hallway inside of Door #5 where I work at South Middle School. Kids were going this way and that, and I was asking 6th grade teacher and negotiations member at the time, Keith Kloppmann, about life on negotiations. Keith sighed and hung his head slightly. I could tell he was trying to put the right words in the right order. He looked up, softly shook his head, and said quite matter-of-factly, “I don’t know, Matt.” I’ll never forget how honest he sounded and how directly he looked me in the eye. Keith went on to tell me he didn’t understand why certain decisions got made the way they did, and how if people didn’t start to take an interest in our school district then who knows what would become of it. He mentioned that a young guy like me (I was a young 31 at the time) should get involved so when the elder members of the negotiations team leave there would still be experienced people on the team.

In the fall of 2008, ECAE President, Ron Martin, asked me to help represent the middle school level for the ECAE negotiations team. I knew this would be an opportunity to learn more about our profession, but before I committed I selfishly thought about the time that I would be spending away from my wife and two little girls. I called my wife and told her about the conversation I had with Keith all those years back and asked if she would be alright with me taking on an additional commitment. A few minutes later with her support I responded to the request with a definite “yes.”

After spending the last 10 months on our negotiations team I have a much better understanding of how difficult a job it is to maintain a solid, quality career for our membership and how much time it takes to do so. Our team leader, James Martin, has spent countless hours trying to come up with financial scenarios to help strengthen the shield of our membership from these tough economic times. Our team as a whole has spent hours trying to come up with contract language to allow some resemblance of equity among the three grade levels. We have also dissected the master contract section by section, line by line, word by word. Not even close to half of the time we’ve spent together has actually been spent meeting with the board. Most of our time has been spent trying to create a package that we truly believe will be for the greater good for *all* of our membership.

I believe that one has to look at the negotiations process with a sharp focus of reality. My first reality check was that it is a SLOW moving process. It is, however, a process that cannot be done hastily, vengefully, or from a standpoint of greed. One of our members has often said in regard to our total package, “No matter how you look at it, there is a pile of money sitting on the table and our job is to figure out the best way to allocate that money for our membership.”

We know that our side is trying to protect our members and get them the best contract we can get them. The side of the board is trying to protect the taxpayers and get them the best deal as well. It is, at times, a give and take process. There have been times when we’ve spent hours putting together a plan only to have it get shot down in two minutes by the board without a give or a take. I know we’ve done the same with their proposals as well. Then it is back to the drawing board for both sides to try and find something that works.

When I run into teachers I know and they ask me how things are going with negotiations I sometimes find myself pausing, sighing softly shaking my head, then responding with, “I don’t know.” What I do know is that we are not there yet and we’re not going to settle for anything less than what we believe is the best total package for you. We are, however, still meeting and still engaged in conversations with the board. From what I’ve been told by the elder members of our negotiations team...this is a good thing.

Respectfully,
Matt Kulasiewicz, Social Studies 7, South Middle School
ECAE Negotiations Member

Every kid deserves a great school!

Membership/Savers’ Club Card

The WEAC Membership/Savers’ Club Card is a two-year card that was mailed to members’ home addresses in late August 2008. The card includes each member’s unique ID number. New members will receive a card in 2009.

Please do not destroy your card. It serves as your Savers’ Club ID as well as for on-line trainings, admission to the annual WEAC Convention, and contains your membership ID number.

If you have lost or thrown your card away you should print out a new one at www.weac.org. Sign-in as a member, click “My Profile” in the upper part of the page, then “Manage my demographic information.” Or if you need help—please contact Ron Martin at the ECAE office, 835-1916 and we’ll be glad to print out a new card for you.

New Teacher Orientation

Carole Galloy

New teachers to the Eau Claire Area School District participated in New Teacher Orientation sessions August 24-26. New teachers were able to meet with their mentors for lunch (served by ECASD school board members) and work together in their respective buildings to get comfortable with procedures, schedules and curriculum. They also learned about the Eau Claire Association of Educators, signed up for insurance, got ID badges and classroom keys. If you have new faculty in your building, be sure to give them your help and encouragement. We should all be able to remember how our first days at a new school can be overwhelming.



Back To School

Carole Galloy

Icertainly enjoyed the art lesson we received on our first day at Memorial. If you are interested in knowing how crayons are made go to <http://youtube.com/watch?v=HMU-wXsgyR8> to see a short video about the process. There is also a short history at <http://ezinearticles.com/?Kids-Crayons---History-and-Trivia&id=336606> along with some activities.



Cleaning closets or garages?
Looking for a bargain?

BARGAIN BLITZ

List your items in the
Inkwell Bargain Blitz!

Deadline for submitting materials is the 20th of each month. Sorry, no personal ads.
Send items to Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: Spacious bi-level condo, 3 large bedrooms, 2 full baths, 2 gas fireplaces, extra large 2 car garage, plenty of storage space, private deck in back yard, perennial garden. If you are tired of mowing and shoveling this is the perfect place for you. Condo fees only \$75.00/mo. Located at 1215 Glades Dr. Altoona. Asking price \$128,900.00. For more information or to make an appointment to see our home call Barb at 832-4590 or e-mail bbarkleyellingson@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: Selmer clarinet, needs new pads but otherwise in good condition. Includes case and music stand, \$100. Email Monica at mbauer@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: Youth Bow—Browning Micro Midas 3. Right handed, draw weight 30-40 lbs. Includes case, sights, quiver, 6 arrows, \$200. Email: Monica at mbauer@ecasd.k12.wi.us

The Eau Claire Association of Educators would like to welcome the following staff to the Eau Claire Area School District! It's great to have you with us!

Caroline Akervik - Robbins Elementary School
Brent Bergstrom - Memorial High School
Jill Borgwardt - Lakeshore Elementary School
Cari Colegrove - Northstar Middle School
Ashley Cook - Lakeshore Elementary School
Abby Dombeck - Lakeshore Elementary School
Jamie Earle - Roosevelt Elementary School
Chloe Gabler - District, Occupational Therapist
Sara Gunderson - Sherman Elementary School
Alyssa Haugen - South Middle School
Dustin Hayes - Sherman Elementary School
Heather Hernandez - Manz Elementary School
Benjamin King - Lakeshore Elementary School
Katie Kramschuster - Locust Lane Elementary School
Jill Kulig - Sherman Elementary School & Itinerant Sites
Marcus Larsen - DeLong Middle School
Ashley Lien - Robbins Elementary School
Birttany Merkes -
Colleen Morgan - South Middle School

Kajsa Mountain - Longfellow Elementary School
Derek Olson - Memorial High School
Kerri Patton - DeLong Middle School
Reed Pecha - South Middle School
Heidi Reeves - Robbins Elementary School
Kelly Pietsch - Robbins Elementary School
Ryan Robarge - Sherman Elementary School
Michael Roemhild - Lakeshore Elementary School
Amanda Romanowski - Chippewa Valley Montessori School
Lindsay Rudebusch - Meadowview Elementary School
Elisabeth Sacia - Roosevelt Elementary School
Nikki Sprague - Meadowview Elementary School
Bart Steffen - Chippewa Valley Montessori School
Erica Thiess - South Middle School & Sherman Elementary
Ashlie Tweed - Chippewa Valley Montessori Charter School
Sally Velleux - South Middle School
Nathan Wells - Lakeshore Elementary School
Jennifer Wood - Sherman Elementary School
Pang Xiong - Lakeshore Elementary School

Fair Share Fee Payers

A fair share fee payer pays a "fair share" to ECAE, WEAC, and NEA for the services it renders to the non-member in its capacity as the exclusive bargaining representative. Fair share fee payers are not members for governance purposes (e.g. no voting rights, can't hold office).

Your local association dues are \$176.00 of which \$2.00 is for political action. Any member wishing to request a refund of that portion of payment designated for political activity by writing to ECAE Treasurer, 2004 Highland Avenue, Suite L, Eau Claire, WI 54701 by September 15. This notice must be mailed to the ECAE office it cannot be Emailed. This notice must also be done annually—it does not carry over from year to year. **If you have questions, please contact the ECAE office at 835-1916.**



Chris Redman
Realtor

Cell: (715) 828-2341

All the Listings...All the Time®



KLEVEN
REAL ESTATE, INC.

1603 Harding Avenue, Eau Claire WI 54701

E-mail: ChrisJRedman@hotmail.com

Office Fax: (715) 834-9500

Office Phone: (715) 834-1501

www.KlevenRealtors.com

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