

In this issue

Adequacy and Equity
Proclamation

Page 4

Mooneyham Named
Friend of Education

Page 6

Other Award Winners

Pages 7-10

Brown vs. Board
Provided
Opportunities for All

Pages 11

AYP Is Beginning
to Take Its Toll

Page 12

Big Brother is
Watching You

Page 14

Periodical
Post Paid at
Okla. City, OK

The Education Focus
OEA's all-member publication

Delegates Embrace A&E Project

"It's the Right Thing to Do"

From gavel to gavel, this year's Delegate Assembly (DA) was filled with historic moments.

Highlights the two-day day meeting included an address to the Assembly by Oklahoma's First Lady and a special presentation on the 50th anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka.

But passage of New Business Item #1, which authorized the Oklahoma Education Association to pursue a legal remedy to compel the state to adequately and equitably fund public education, is what made this DA one of the most important in Association history.

At the 2003 DA, delegates charged



Charlene Bower, a member of the Frederick Association of Classroom Teachers, speaks in favor of the Adequacy and Equity project.

the OEA with researching and developing a long-term strategy to achieve adequate and equitable funding for schools. This year's Assembly demonstrated wide-ranging support for mov-

ing forward with the Adequacy and Equity (A&E) project that will be one of the Association's most important projects for the next few years.

The A&E plan includes a litigation and legislative strategy, membership organizing efforts and collective bargaining support. To pay for the project, the delegates approved the

2004-05 budget, which dedicates \$5 per member for the project.

"It takes money to lower class size and provide adequate resources," said

See "A&E Project" on Page 3

Fully Paid Insurance Becomes a Reality

Changes Will Increase Take Home Pay for Many

By Doug Folks

At last, Oklahoma teachers will have 100 percent of their individual health insurance premium paid by the state, beginning with next school year.

When Gov. Brad Henry signed HB 2662 into law on April 19, it marked the end of a long journey by Oklahoma Education Association members who have been lobbying hard for the benefit for several years. The legislature promised 100 percent paid insurance in 1998, but broken promises and economic downturns prevented it from becoming a reality.

The final version of HB 2662

passed both houses without a dissenting vote. OEA leaders and staff worked hard behind the scenes to strike the best deal possible with legislative leaders so that it would affect all teachers as fairly as possible.

"Compensation packages vary from district to district, so we tried to make sure that this was taken into consideration by Legislative leadership," said OEA President Roy Bishop.

HB 2662 will change, for the better, how school employees are compensated. Beginning in 2004-05, the state will pay 100 percent of the Health-Choice High Option individual health

care premium. With the change, every teacher taking insurance will see an increase in take-home pay. Employees who are not on the state health care plan may or may not see an increase in their taxable income.

Because there are several ways in which districts pay health insurance, the bill had to cover several different scenarios. On page 5 are some quick examples of how the new bill will affect your pocketbook, as well as some significant changes in language. If you have further questions, call your regional advocate.

See "Insurance Bill" on Page 5

We'll Never Stop Fighting for Educators

By Roy Bishop

OEA President

Presiding over my first Delegate Assembly as president this year, I was reminded of why I continue to be in awe of our organization and its members.

Oklahoma educators are everyday heroes who rise above the most incredible odds. They never give up. They never give in. They know that OEA will never stop fighting for what is right for educators.

Many of the fruits of our struggles were evident at this year's Assembly.

The 2004 Delegate Assembly was filled with applause, laughter, cheers and hope. The nearly 400 delegates in attendance heard First Lady Kim Henry talk about Gov. Henry's unwavering commitment to public education.



President Roy Bishop

Gov. Henry proved that by using his considerable influence to help pass our health insurance bill that will fully pay teacher's individual health insurance. His agenda is evident behind a bill to raise teacher salaries to the regional average. Its prospects are extremely promising.

Finally, delegates authorized the OEA to execute its strategy to compel the state of Oklahoma to provide adequate and equitable funding for Oklahoma schools.

This project could well make history. For the first time ever, this organization seeks to shift the education funding debate away from partisan politics, where competing interests can cloud educational priorities.

The multifaceted project has been more than a year in the planning process. It calls for building an arsenal of compelling evidence supporting the need for adequate funding. An army of educators and friends of education will hit the ground, building support every step of the way.

Presently, education funding is done the opposite of how it should be. It be-

gins with what's leftover, after the political storms have subsided.

If excellence is the goal, as it must be, the process must begin, not end, with identifying how much money Oklahoma children need to meet or exceed today's rigorous academic standards. Otherwise, how can we expect them to excel in today's competitive world and become productive contributors to our economy?

Every Oklahoma child should be entitled to a constitutionally adequate public education. As this process unfolds, the OEA will aggressively pursue the realization of this ideal through every appropriate avenue.

We owe it to our educators, to our children and to our communities. It is the right thing to do.

Staples, Antioch Baptist Church Share HCR Award

By Stacy Martin

The Antioch Baptist Church of Tulsa and Staples The Office Superstore have both been recognized by the Oklahoma Education Association's Human and Civil Rights Committee as winners of 2004 Tuskahoma Brown Miller Human Rights awards.

The award annually goes to a business or group which has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

The committee recognized Antioch Baptist for its summer program for disadvantaged children. The program is designed to provide school-age children structured, positive activities to discourage behavior problems from a lack of structure and supervision during summertime.

Church members, led by Rev. M.C. Potter, spend countless hours during the summer program entertaining, enlightening and caring for the children.

Average daily attendance is 150, comprised primarily of minority chil-

dren ranging from first through ninth grades. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are served.

In nominating the church, Tulsa

Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA) President Steve Stockley said, "This population of minority children often experience great difficulty re-entering the structure of a school environment after spending a summer of unsupervised activity.

"Rev. Potter's congregation offers a vacation/learning experience with structure and educational components.

Teachers said the children were much better equipped to re-enter school this fall. By lending a loving hand to parents in need, this community of caring, concerned volunteers provided the village it takes to raise and educate a child."

The summer program offers recreational activities such as basketball, volleyball, swimming lessons, talent shows and field trips. It also covers more serious ground on social skills, and with presentations by the Tulsa Gang Task Force, Justice Department counselors and health department professionals.

Additionally, for the past decade the church has offered students an on-site tutoring program at Sam Houston Elementary, whether church members or not. Church members also serve as mentors for Gilcrease Intermediate School.

The second Tuskahoma winner was Staples office supply stores, notably the stores in Oklahoma City, Lawton and Tulsa.

Staples loves public education and shows it with a deep commitment of resources to OEA projects.

As proof of the breadth and scope of Staples' support, the company was nominated by leaders of four large Oklahoma locals – Jamie McCoy, president of the Mid-Del Association

See "Staples Provides" on Page 10

Tuskahoma Brown Miller Human Rights Award

OEA

Volume 21, No. 7
A production of OEA's
Communications Center

Roy Bishop, President
Becky Felts, Vice President
David DuVall, Executive Director
Lela Odom, Associate Executive Director

The Education Focus

Doug Folks, Editor
Contributing Editors
Marty Bull
Stacy Martin
Jeff Savage
Bruce Treadaway
Patti Razien
Pam Westbrook, Proofing
Marty Hart, Graphic Artist
Maureen Peters, Center Assistant

The Education Focus (ISSN 1542-1678) is published nine times annually with issues in September/October, November, December/January, February, March, April, May, June/July and August for \$5 by the Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Periodicals postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Education Focus, PO Box 18485, Oklahoma City, OK 73154

A&E Project Will Shift Debate Away from Partisan Politics

Continued from Page 1

OEA President Roy Bishop of the state's funding needs. "The A&E Project will shift the debate on education funding from partisan politics to what it actually costs to adequately fund a child's education."

After a presentation of the A&E Project by Executive Director David DuVall and General Counsel Richard Wilkinson, the delegates participated in two separate actions that demonstrated full support for the project.

A proclamation (see page 4) was passed overwhelmingly by the Assembly, authorizing the project, and many delegates signed commitment cards, pledging active support for the effort in their districts.

"The delegates once again proved that OEA members are willing to do whatever it takes to adequately fund education," said Bishop. "The commitment they demonstrated by passing both the proclamation and the budget to support the project assures its success."

In support of the motion to fund the A&E project, OEA Vice President Becky Felts said it was, "...the right thing to do. OEA members know what

it takes to meet today's high standards."

More details of the A&E project will be coming to members in the coming months. It contains three primary sections. They are:

- The OEA Office of the General Counsel will lead the litigation team that will oversee the project from the collection of information to the presentation of the case. Evidence supporting the case will be collected from and testimony will be given by teachers, administrators, support professionals, education experts and parents.

- The OEA Regional Teams will work closely with local Associations to organize aggressive membership campaigns that will build universal support of the project. Advocacy specialists will expand bargaining program to include both website and negotiations team support.

- * OEA members will help make the case for adequacy and equity by sharing stories of inadequacies in their work places. "Legal Liaisons" will become the electronic conduit between school sites and the OEA Legal Department by providing information on



Executive Director David DuVall (right) and General Counsel Richard Wilkinson give an overview of the Adequacy and Equity Project to the delegates.

inadequate and inequitable instructional resources, facilities and support services, and salaries.

"To make the case, our members must be willing to share stories that illustrate how inadequate funding has a negative effect on their students," said Bishop. "It will be these stories that will be used to prove Oklahoma schools cannot continue to be underfunded."

In other DA business, delegates ap-

proved four amendments to the OEA Constitution:

- Added any NEA Executive Committee member from Oklahoma as a nonvoting, ex-officio director to the

OEA Board of Directors;

- Clarified the title of Zone Director;

- Changed "associate membership" to "substitute membership" to be consistent with NEA terminology; and

- Finalized an agreement to unify the Oklahoma Retired Educators Association with the

OEA and NEA Retired.

The delegates also passed two other new business items. New Business Item #2 recommended that the city of Tulsa serve as the location of the 2007 OEA Convention, and New Business Item #3 recommended that OEA work vigorously to implement the Wisconsin or Alabama models for teaching assistants' and paraprofessionals' qualifications under President Bush's No Child Left Behind.



Ann Willett (right), delegate for the Mustang Association of Classroom Teachers, takes a point of personal privilege during the Delegate Assembly to thank Connie Graham, outgoing director from Northwest Zone C and a Mustang teacher, for her service to the zone and the OEA. It was also the last Delegate Assembly as a zone director for Cheryl Dowell, Southwest C director and a special education teacher in Comanche, who is completing her second term.

Member Benefits Offering Free Vacation Getaway

NEA members can register anytime during the month of May 2004 on the NEA Member Benefits website (www.neamb.com) for a chance to win a free "NEA Getaway" Vacation Package, compliments of the NEA Home Financing Program.

Be the lucky winner of a three-day/two-night stay at a deluxe hotel/resort for two adults (and up to two children sharing the same room) at

over 300 locations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Bahamas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The package features breakfast for two each morning (where available), emergency roadside assistance the week you travel, and a free one-year Access Card for discount dining, movies, shopping, travel and more. (Transportation not included.)

Giveaway entry begins on May 1, 2004 and ends on May 31, 2004. No purchase necessary to enter.

President Bishop Shares His Vision for the Association

In his opening address, OEA President Roy Bishop described his dream of creating the best schools in the country.

“Our vision is about creating great schools and about strengthening the Association so that we can achieve great schools,” said Bishop. “I’m committed to this vision, Becky and your zone directors are committed, David and your OEA staff are committed, and I’m asking you to be committed to this vision as well.”

Bishop also applauded the Governor’s signing of HB 2662, which provides 100 percent, state-paid individual health insurance for teachers, as the first step in a long-term plan to meet the regional salary averages (see page 1 story). Outlining the Governor’s five-year plan, Bishop reminded delegates that the OEA leadership had proposed the same plan in the past, but those proposals fell on deaf ears.

“It’s great to have a governor who shares our vision,” said Bishop. “But this plan only became a reality because we had the strength and courage to present it, to stand by it, and to make our voices heard at the capitol.”

To celebrate the signing of the health insurance bill, delegates enjoyed a party-like atmosphere complete with cake as OEA Executive Director David DuVall gave the history of teacher health insurance.

“It’s been a long time coming,” said DuVall. “OEA was the first to push for fully paid health insurance in the ’70s and we were there every step of the way until it became a reality. This is our victory.”

First Lady Kim Henry Addresses Delegates

Former OEA member and current honorary member, First Lady Kim Henry, was met with a standing ovation after being introduced by Shawnee ACT president Sabra Tucker. Henry entered the Assembly Hall just moments after delegates had viewed a video of the Governor’s signing of the insurance bill. Bishop thanked her for her continued support and introduced her as “our nominee for Secretary of Education.”

“As I look out and see you I know that the cream of the crop is still in the classroom,” said the First Lady. “Thank you for weathering the storm.”

The 10-year teaching veteran said that Gov. Henry understands the impact of education and teachers could have no better friend in office than her husband.

Members Narrate *Brown* Commemoration

A segment commemorating the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* featured several OEA members and a short video from the NEA.

OEA members Phyllis Jefferson, Chickasha; Frank Brazwell, Tulsa Union; and Lawrence Lane, Checotah; and OEA Associate Executive Director Charles McCauley served as narrators during the multimedia presentation. The commemorative gave a brief history of the events that led to the *Brown* decision and the ramifications for America’s schools and the Civil Rights movement.

Crowder Discusses NCLB

NEA Executive Committee Member and former OEA President Carolyn Crowder, a first grade teacher in Mustang, provided a perspective on the ramifications of Bush’s so-called No Child Left Behind law and how the NEA is fighting to get changes made to the law.

Seeking Adequacy and Equity Proclamation

(as approved by the Delegate Assembly, April 23, 2004)

WHEREAS the public schools of the State of Oklahoma are chronically under-financed, causing our education system’s funding levels to consistently rank in the bottom five nationally;

WHEREAS resources for the public schools of the State of Oklahoma have declined even further after being slashed over \$300 million in the last three years due to the legislative budget crisis;

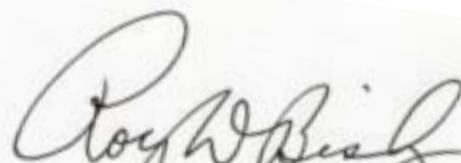
WHEREAS the state of Oklahoma has repeatedly failed to develop education funding solutions that are adequate and equitable or which meet the needs of Oklahoma’s children, public education employees, and the public schools of the state of Oklahoma;

WHEREAS the Oklahoma Education Association believes that every child in the State of Oklahoma is lawfully entitled to an equal opportunity for a constitutionally adequate education; and

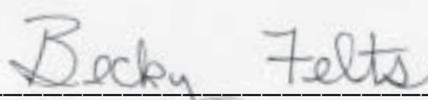
WHEREAS the state of Oklahoma has consistently failed to provide the resources necessary to fulfill its constitutional obligation to establish and maintain a system of free public schools wherein all the children of the State may be educated.

BE IT THEREFORE KNOWN TO ALL PRESENT that the OEA Delegate Assembly hereby authorizes the OEA to proceed with appropriate litigation to compel the state of Oklahoma to adequately and equitably fund the public schools of the state of Oklahoma and **be it further known** that the OEA Delegate Assembly authorizes the OEA to develop an organizing plan to support such litigation.

By the power vested in us by the 2004 OEA Delegate Assembly, we hereby affix our signatures and the official seal of the Oklahoma Education Association hereto this 24th day of April, 2004.



ROY BISHOP, President
Oklahoma Education Association



BECKY FELTS, Vice President
Oklahoma Education Association

Insurance Bill Will Put Money in Pockets

Continued from Page 1

Insurance in 2003-04

The cost for an individual Health-Choice High Option premium for 2003-04 is \$3,361. The district is required to pay 75 percent of the individual health insurance premium, and the certified employee is responsible for the other 25 percent. The state pays 58 percent (\$1,950) of the individual premium (aka the Flexible Benefit Allowance), and the district can use that 58 percent to meet its obligation. In many places, the district “backs out” of a teacher’s salary the district’s 17 percent obligation (\$571) and the employee’s remaining 25 percent (\$840). (Some districts do pay some or all of the 42 percent as a “take it or lose it” benefit.) Certified employees not taking the insurance receive an “in lieu of” cash payment of \$837 (\$69.71 a month).

Insurance in 2004-05

Scenario #1

Today — The state pays 58 percent of the individual premium, and your

district “backs out” the remaining 42 percent from your salary.

Next year – the state will pay 100 percent of the individual premium and, if you take insurance, the roughly \$1,474 a year that is now backed out of your salary will go back into your paycheck. If you do not take insurance, nothing will change.

Scenario #2

Today — The state pays 58 percent of the individual premium, your district pays its 17 percent obligation as a “take it or lose it” benefit, and you pay the remaining 25 percent.

Next year – The state will pay 100 percent of the individual premium, and your 25 percent (\$878 a year) will go back into your paycheck. The district’s 17 percent (\$571 per year per employee taking insurance) must be used for “instructional purposes,” which could include hiring new personnel to reduce class size or restore programs, purchasing instructional materials, or placing it on the salary schedule. Bar-



Rousing applause followed Gov. Brad Henry’s signing of HB 2662, which will provide 100 percent state-paid individual insurance premiums for teachers. He is surrounded by OEA members and (from left) Sen. Kenneth Corn, First Lady Kim Henry and OEA President Roy Bishop.

gaining locals can negotiate for this money. If you do not take insurance, any change will depend on what happens to the district’s obligation after bargaining.

Scenario #3

Today – The state pays 58 percent of the individual premium, and your district pays the remaining 42 percent as a “take it or lose it” benefit.

Next year – The state will pay 100 percent of the single premium. The employee obligation (\$840 per person taking insurance) will be distributed among current employees (pending bargaining). The district obligation (\$571 per person taking insurance) must go to “instructional purposes” as described in Scenario #2. All instructional personnel will benefit by whatever method the employee obligation is distributed through the salary schedule and how the district’s portion is distributed.

Other significant issues:

- State law now says that a district shall count only salary and retirement in meeting the State Minimum Salary Schedule.
- Those not taking insurance will continue to receive the “in lieu of” payment (\$69.13 a month) in salary next year. However, education employees should remember that the original

intent of the insurance language was that once 100 percent of the individual premium was paid by the state, it would become a “take it or lose it” benefit. The OEA has fought hard to keep the in lieu of cash payment available and will continue to do so.

- Those not now subscribing to the state insurance plan will be able to sign up for health insurance during the open enrollment period during October, and will begin receiving the full benefit in January 2005.

- Language has been removed from law that once required a district to continue paying the percentage or dollar amount for insurance that it paid the previous year. As stated above, the state will now pay 100 percent of the individual premium and anything the district paid as a true fringe will be negotiable.

- Employees should expect any increases in take home pay from the insurance changes to appear in their first paycheck of the 2004-05 school year.

- Support employees on the state insurance plan will continue to have 100 percent of their individual health care premium paid by the state. Likewise, those support employees not taking insurance will continue to receive an “in lieu of” cash payment of \$189.69 a month.

History of State Paid Insurance

1998-99	Certified	Support
	33.3%	50%

The Flexible Benefit Allowance (FBA) is signed into law. The state paid one-third (\$57 a month) of a certified employee’s single insurance premium, and 50 percent (\$85 a month) of the support employee’s individual premium.

1999-00	Certified	Support
	\$57.83	\$150.42

The legislature changes the language to reflect an exact dollar figure, and increases the support FBA to 85.8 percent.

2000-01	Certified	Support
	\$57.83	\$170.24

No change for certified, but support FBA increases.

2001-02	Certified	Support
	\$69.71	\$189.69

The FBA increases for both certified and support.

2002-03	Certified FBA	Certified In Lieu of	Support FBA	Support In Lieu of
	58%	\$69.71	100%	\$189.69

The legislature creates a new category for employees taking cash instead of insurance and commits to a percentage of the individual premium to help employees deal with increasing rates. The FBA moves to 58 percent for certified and 100 percent for support taking the insurance. Those taking cash receive the same as 2001-02.

2003-04	Certified FBA	Certified In Lieu of	Support FBA	Support In Lieu of
	58%	\$69.71	100%	\$189.69

No changes from 02-03.

2004-05	Certified FBA	Certified In Lieu of	Support FBA	Support In Lieu of
	100%	\$69.71	100%	\$189.69

HB 2662 provides for 100 percent state-paid individual health insurance premiums for certified employees, and keeps the In Lieu Of cash payment the same. Support insurance remains the same. Salary and retirement are now the only items allowed when considering the State Minimum Salary Schedule.

Co-Founding of Education Coalition Is Career Highlight for Mooneyham

By Doug Folks

Bob Mooneyham has spent his adult life working to improve public education. From teacher to administrator to executive director of the one of the state's most influential education organizations, he has had many successes on which to hang his hat.

But the proudest moment of his career came when a group of traditional rivals put aside their differences and

flower beds, there wasn't a whole lot to do."

Prior to joining the OSSBA, Mooneyham taught in Yukon, was director of the Beaver County Cooperative Guidance Program and served as superintendent for Corn Public Schools (before Corn and Colony consolidated to form Washita Heights) and for Okemah Public Schools. He also served as a special instructor at the

Friend of Education

joined as one. As executive director of the Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA), Mooneyham helped found the Oklahoma Education Coalition in 1998. Today, the Coalition continues to fight for education and to grow stronger in its influence and political power.

For his part in creating the Coalition, as well as a lifetime of dedication to education, Mooneyham has been named winner of the Oklahoma Education Association's 2004 Friend of Education.

"We couldn't honor someone more dedicated to public education," said OEA President Roy Bishop. "Bob's entire professional career has been dedicated to the children of Oklahoma, from his work with OSSBA and the Education Coalition, and now as executive director of the National Rural Education Association (NREA), Bob has done it all for public education."

Mooneyham tried to retire after 25 years with the OSSBA. But he soon found himself wanting to step back into the challenges of fighting for education, and he joined the NREA in 2002.

"I flunked retirement," he said of his move back into the workforce. "After I painted the house and cleaned out the

University of Oklahoma while getting his doctorate in education.

The founding of the Coalition stands out as the pinnacle of a long, successful career. Mooneyham says the idea for a coalition germinated from a conversation between him and Randall Raburn, executive director of the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA).

In an effort to "correct mistakes" and improve relationships with other education groups – in particular the OEA and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – Mooneyham and Raburn brought together several groups in 1998. The intent was to find common ground and work together at the legislature for the common good of public education.

"We just literally got tired of fighting our battles before the legislature," Mooneyham said. "We operated very informally for a while ... It was very tenuous in the beginning."

OEA President Roy Bishop says Mooneyham's influence gave the Coalition its strength.

"The Coalition would not be recognized as a major player in the legislative arena had it not been for Bob Mooneyham," he said. "His drive and



Bob Mooneyham

his commitment to what the Coalition could be helped solidify all these diverse groups into one mind."

In addition to Mooneyham's leadership, an unpleasant meeting at the Capitol brought the group together.

"Sen. Cal Hobson called us all together and basically said there would be no money for education, period. And none of us were satisfied with that proclamation," he said. "I think that meeting really welded the Coalition together more so than any other single event."

Working as one, the group saw immediate results.

"The single most important advantage of the Coalition was the fact that the legislature could no longer manipulate us and set us against one another on issues that would really insulate them from the political pressure we could apply jointly. (When) everybody agreed that we were not going to hang our dirty laundry out at the Capitol and we were going to speak in one voice, that made all the difference in the world."

The Coalition's first big victory came on Feb. 16, 2000. On that day, the Coalition brought some 30,000 people to Oklahoma City for the "Put Education First Rally," which at that time was the largest single event ever held for public education. It was a day that changed minds throughout the Capitol, and resulted in a \$3,000 across the board raise for state teachers.

"Governor Frank Keating was opposed to (the funding idea). Both lead-

ers in the House and the Senate were opposed to it. Before the day was over, all three of them had conceded," Mooneyham said.

"It was a very monumental moment for the Coalition. It proved the wisdom of having the Coalition."

Mooneyham brought to the Coalition the same success he generated at OSSBA. When he took the position as executive director of OSSBA in 1975, the organization had only about 40 percent of state school boards as members and operated on a \$169,000 budget. When he left, membership was above 99 percent (it reached 100 percent twice under his leadership) and worked off of a budget of \$1.6 million.

Now, as exec for the National Rural Education Association, Mooneyham hopes for similar success. Since taking over the NREA, he has already created a first-ever membership level for individual schools that includes one teacher position and six voting positions. He is also establishing natural partnerships with businesses found in rural communities.

It was that "fighting the good fight" that Mooneyham missed most during his retirement. And just like he fought for public education through OSSBA and the Education Coalition, you can bet he'll do the same through the NREA.

5 Star Local Awards

Honoring local Associations for their commitment to providing well-rounded services for their members

5 Star Locals

Edmond ACT
Enid EA
Mid-DeI ACT
Moore ACT
Putnam City ACT
Sand Springs EA

4 Star Locals

McLoud
Tulsa CTA

3 Star Locals

Professional Educators of Norman
Professional Educators' Association of Lawton
Ponca City ACT

2 Star Locals

Frederick ACT

Tireless Efforts Earn Shawnee Teacher the Kate Frank Award

By Stacy Martin

Shawnee teacher Debbie Hogue-Downing is the 2004 recipient of the Oklahoma Education Association's Kate Frank Award.

The award criteria states that the winner must be an advocate for mem-

Kate Frank Award

ber rights and show a commitment to advancing the Association, while encouraging advocacy among peers.

Also, the award stipulates the winner should show professionalism and a desire to improve the profession through efforts within the education community and the general public.

Hogue-Downing, a Native American, shows these traits and more in numerous ways. She is a longtime

member of the OEA's Human and Civil Rights Committee, which is charged with increasing minority educators' involvement and advancement in the profession. She has been politically active throughout her education career by assisting in political races for friends of education and through frequent lobbying at the State Capitol.

She has served as zone vice president, National Education Association Women's Leadership Cadre, NEA Minority Affairs Committee, and NEA Director, among others.

Hogue-Downing's nomination for the Kate Frank award arrived with a stellar group of recommendations, including letters from House Speaker Larry Adair, former OEA President Barbara Smith, former OEA Vice



Debbie Hogue-Downing (left) helped organize Shawnee's Read Across America event in February at the Shawnee Mall. She had help during the day from Oklahoma Baptist University students Donna Taulber (center) and H.R. Sweat, who served as MCs.

President Martha McDonald-Blesener, and Shawnee Mayor Chris Harden.

Hogue-Downing organized Shawnee's first American Education Parade, as well as other events such as NEA's Read Across America and American Education Week

"Debbie has been my most frequent

caller requesting the community's involvement in school projects," said Mayor Harden in her recommendation.

"She is tireless in her efforts to promote education and the benefits of learning to read. She keeps a smile on her face and has a determination to make sure children are educated."

Ackerman Speaks Out Against Injustice

By Stacy Martin

Edmond teacher Judy Ackerman is well known for sticking up for the little guy. No matter what the circumstance, she speaks out.

It is that insistence to right the wrong that Ackerman has been named the recipient of the 2004 Glenn Snider Human Relations award.

In nominating Ackerman, Edmond Association of Classroom Teachers president Martha Wissler said Ackerman speaks out on discrimination, individual rights, hate crimes, injustice and other human rights issues.

"As long as I have known Judy, some 20 years now, she has always been a champion of the underdog, whether that underdog is a student, individual in the community or education itself," Wissler wrote. "She is a great role model for her students and col-



Edmond's Judy Ackerman

leagues. She isn't afraid to speak out on the injustices in the world."

What's more, Ackerman models this approach for her journalism students at Edmond North High School. She speaks freely on issues reflecting her

Glenn Snider Award

personal beliefs and encourages her students to do the same.

At the academic level, her teaching style reflects a commitment to excellence and an outside-the-box teaching philosophy.

For the first time since the late 90s, the Glenn Snider Award carries a cash stipend for its winner. Ackerman will receive \$800 in honor of her dedication

to human rights issues.

In support of Ackerman's nomination for the award, Gail Williams, EACT vice president, wrote, "As a parent of two children who experienced Mrs. Ackerman's class, I am able to speak personally of her unfailing enthusiasm and belief in the uniqueness and abilities of all individuals. I found her to have an open mind to new ideas and beliefs and to respect the ideas and beliefs of others. Her classroom fosters free expression and thought in a safe environment."

Looking for Ways to Make Your Money Grow?

Just look to NEA Member Benefits Money Market and Certificate of Deposit with consistently the highest rates in the country, plus a one-time *1 percent bonus* for the first 60 days of a Money Market Account. NEA Member Benefits recognizes you have a busy schedule, and so we've

arranged for MBNA America to provide extended customer service hours to all of our NEA-sponsored FDIC-Insured Money Market Account and NEA-sponsored GoldCertificate CD member customers. Call 800-348-4632 Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. ET.

Dill's Students Track "Great Explorers"

By Jeff Savage

Euva Dill believes every child can learn, provided you can discover the right learning method for that student.

With that philosophy Dill developed "The Great Explorers" program to help her

fifth grade students learn about other cities, states and countries. The students learn how other places in the world are similar and different from Tulsa, with the goal to get students thinking globally.

This successful program earned Dill the "Instructional Excellence in Education Award" for Teachers Teaching Students. The award recognizes members for outstanding contributions in instructional excellence with students.

A member of Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association, Dill was nominated by a colleague for the multiple disciplines she employs with The Great

Teachers Teaching Students

Explorers. Dill says the project incorporates social studies, writing, language, grammar, reading, spelling and sometimes science.

She developed the program after several days of brainstorming.

"I wanted to develop a program that would be a year long unit and would involve family, and keep the students interested in learning," Dill said.

With financial help from a grant, Dill purchased materials, which included a



Euva Dill

small stuffed animal for each student. The stuffed animal — or "Great Explorer" — travels with a member of the family or friend. The person taking the "explorer" must write a journal telling of all the sights and mail a postcard signed by the Great Explorer to the student.

Classroom maps show pins where the explorers have traveled and the wall is covered with postcards. They have explorers as far away as Germany, Afghanistan, Iraq and Hawaii. The students compile the information sent to them and research other aspects and then report to the class.

"This is a wonderful learning experience for the students and an excellent way to get parents involved," said Dill, who has taught at Lindbergh Elementary in Tulsa since 1988. "They will learn about the world they live in and develop a great appreciation for it."

She added that her greatest reward in teaching is finding the right challenge for each student to keep them interested in learning for a lifetime.

Wissler's Dedication Earns Nomination For NFIE's Prestigious National Honor

By Stacy Martin

Edmond educator Martha Wissler has been named the Oklahoma nominee for the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) award.

NEA affiliates in each state select

are pared to five finalists who compete for the national honor. Each of the five receives \$10,000 plus expenses to attend the gala awards event in Washington D.C. The ultimate winner is given a \$25,000 cash prize.

Wissler is an advanced math

teacher at Edmond Memorial High School. She is also

president of the 750-member Edmond Association of Classroom Teachers (EACT).

A native of Luverne, Ala., Wissler has served as EACT president since 1998. Her lengthy curriculum vita reflects an educator who is deeply devoted to her students and her profession. Her style is characterized by all of the tenets of teaching excellence, as well as high expectations, out-of-the-box thinking, practicality and

National Foundation for the Improvement of Education Nominee

one nominee each year for the national honor. The award recognizes, rewards and promotes excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession.

"I know that I was born to be a teacher and the decisions I have made throughout my life have deepened that commitment," Wissler said in a narrative of her life. "I am an advocate for my family, my students, my association and for public education."

At the national level, the nominees



Martha Wissler, president of the Edmond ACT, zone director for OKC-C and a math teacher at Edmond Memorial High School, works with junior Hannah Kraeger during a pre-calculus class. Wissler is Oklahoma's nominee for the prestigious NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) award.

lifelong learning.

Wissler serves on the OEA Board of Directors for Zone OKC-C. She recently became nationally board certified and holds the distinction of running Oklahoma's fourth largest local while choosing to teach rather than serving

as a released-time president.

So how does she do it all?

"To tell you the truth, I don't," said Wissler. "EACT is blessed with strong officers and great member involvement. Everyone pulls together to make it happen."

Wilson Sponsored Tax Bill at His Own Risk

By Stacy Martin

Rep. Jim Wilson, D-Tahlequah, is this year's Oklahoma Education Association Outstanding Legislator.

Wilson was nominated for the award for his courage in pushing last session's HB 1357, a bill which would have created a significant alternative school financing source.

The 2003 bill would have broadened the tax base to include taxes on certain higher end services. The tax system is now heavily weighted toward durable goods. Wilson's theory was that services are not taxed equitably. At the same time, it would have incrementally reduced grocery taxes, eventually making the bill revenue neutral.

At the time, Oklahoma was mired in a severe budget crisis. School budgets were being slashed statewide. Scores of education employees were losing

Legislative Award

their jobs. The Legislature had presented no new revenue sources for public education.

In nominating him for the award, Tahlequah Education Association Co-Presidents Lisa Yahola and Jana Wilson noted that Wilson advanced his highly-controversial bill at his own political peril.

One of Wilson's favorite quotes is from the motion picture, "American President," starring Kevin Kline: "I was so caught up in *keeping* my job; I forgot to *do* my job."

"Rep. Jim Wilson has never forgotten to do his job as a legislator and is a genuine advocate for education, and he does it with an attitude of humility and service," wrote Yahola and Wilson.

Among the committees he serves on



Rep. Jim Wilson

is the Appropriations and Budget Committee – a key decision-making body regarding public school funding.

A native of Madison, Wisc., Wilson attended Oklahoma State University where he earned a bachelor's in mathematics. When not conducting the state's business, he operates a computer business in Tahlequah.

SW-A PAC Fund-raising Wins Stan Bryant Award

Zone Southwest A has won the 2004 Stan Bryant Political Action Award.

The award is given annually to the OEA zone that generates the highest significant contribution per member to the OEA Political Action Committee (PAC).

Successful PAC drives and promotions in SW-A raised \$3.92 per member. At the 2003 Zone Day in Elk City, the zone raised \$1,800 and gave away a DVD.

Paula Squires, now superintendent at Mountain View-Gotebo, was the zone director and a counselor at Anadarko when SW-A was conducting its PAC activity. Charlene Bowers, an elementary teacher in Frederick, was the zone PAC representative.

Adair Always Has Education As Top Priority

By Stacy Martin

It is only fitting that House Speaker Larry Adair will leave the Oklahoma State Legislature this year after passage of a bill to provide fully state-paid individual health insurance premiums for teachers.

Adair has been a prime mover in making education the top legislative priority this year. In fact, Adair has always championed public education and those who work in it.

So it is fitting, then, that the OEA gives its Lifetime Support of Education Award to the Stilwell Democrat.

Adair, who leaves office after this session because of term limits, is himself an educator. He was a teacher and an administrator for many years before he began his distinguished, 21-year public service career. He has called education his first love.

He counts among the highlights of

Lifetime Support of Education



Speaker Larry Adair

his career playing a pivotal role in HB 1017, the sweeping education reform law.

However, Adair's career was marked by several other notable accomplishments. In 2003, he authored HB 1767, a comprehensive bill that resolved several critical education issues. Its single most important result was to prohibit school districts from lowering teacher pay, even during times of economic problems.

This year, Adair made it clear that he and the House Democratic caucus would take the lead on teacher raises and 100 percent individual health insurance.

Golden Apple Awards

OEA's Golden Apple Awards annually recognize outstanding communications efforts by local Associations. Following are the award winning locals for 2004.

External Communications
Edmond ACT – Internet homepage, www.edmondact.com

Mid-Del ACT – Read Across America brochure

Internal Communications
Mid-Del ACT – Mid-Del News newsletter

Edmond ACT – EACT Insight newsletter

Sand Springs EA – In Focus newsletter

Special Communications Projects
Mid-Del ACT – Flu Shot Clinic Project

Professional Educators' Association of Lawton (PEAL) – PEAL 2nd Annual Golf Tournament

Champions for Public Education

Hennessee, Robson Honored for Selfless Contributions

By Patti Razien

There are many people who contribute to their communities in a variety of ways. Every once in a while, someone comes along who makes an extraordinary contribution to their local school districts. Two such people are Edna Hennessee of Lawton and Frank Robson of Claremore.

Both are true champions for public education, and both were honored with special recognition awards at the annual OEA Awards Banquet in late April in Oklahoma City.

Eighty-five-year-old Hennessee is the founder and CEO of the nearly 60-year-old Cosmetic Specialty Labs, the nation's oldest and largest private label manufacturer of aloe-vera based cosmetics and health care products. She donated more than 70,000 jars of her CSL hand cream to nearly 30 school districts, allowing them to sell the hand cream as a fund-raiser and keep the proceeds. Her expenses on this project alone exceeded \$70,000.

However, this project is only a "drop in the bucket" to what this Lawtonian has done for these various school districts. She visits these schools and uses every opportunity to tell students to be-



Lawton's Edna Hennessee

lieve in their dreams, work hard in school, and to show kindness to others. She has brought executives from many foreign countries to Lawton elementary schools to meet the students and show them the wonderful examples of American education and to give them the opportunity to share information about their own nations and cultures.

When there is any special need at the school, Hennessee will meet it. She continues to quietly donate to ensure that many financially disadvantaged students' needs are met.

Hennessee helps other organizations, not just schools. For instance,



Claremore's Frank Robson

she made sure that care packages for deployed soldiers from Fort Sill were stocked with her CSL products including hand cream, foot cream, aloe vera and products that help in the dry, desert climates.

Robson, Claremore businessman and philanthropist, has been a longtime supporter of Claremore Public Schools. He and his wife, Ludmila, recently gave \$8 million to help construct a performing arts center for the district and another \$3 million toward an endowment fund for staffing and maintenance of the new facility.

Robson founded the Claremore

AG Edmondson Honored for Protecting Schools

By Bruce Treadaway

This year's OEA Advocate for Academic Freedom Award is presented to Oklahoma's Attorney General, Drew Edmondson. He joins a distinguished list of past honorees including Frosty Troy, Dr. Ann Benson, and the Owasso Association of Classroom Teachers.

The award honors a person or organization whose contribution to the safeguarding of academic freedom has had a significant impact on the public schools of Oklahoma and the nation. Edmondson has provided leadership and defended the rights of teachers and public education throughout his ca-

Advocate for Academic Freedom

reer. He has consistently proven that by his actions.

In February 2000, Edmondson issued an AG opinion concerning a proposed disclaimer about evolution that the Oklahoma State Textbook Committee was considering placing in textbooks for public schools. In that opinion he stated:

"It is established in law that a governmental body may not expand its powers by its own authority. It is also established in law that a governmental

body must operate with such openness that the citizenry is informed of its activities. Any activities of a public officer or public body which do not fall within those parameters are void."

In the opinion, he wrote that the State Textbook Committee lacked authority to require a statement or pronouncement to be added to or placed in textbooks as a condition for their adoption for use in state schools.

With this decision, Edmondson effectively put an end to the movement by certain entities to place evolution disclaimers in Oklahoma public school textbooks.

Public Schools Foundation and has encouraged the formation and growth of school foundations statewide through his generous sponsorship of the Local Education Foundation Outreach Program of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

He has supported a teacher's effort in establishing a geography fair; provided funds to enable students to attend Highway Patrol Camp; supplied start up money for the Accelerated Reader Program at an elementary school; and underwrote scholarships for students at Rose State College and Oklahoma State University.

Staples Provides a Variety of Help

Continued from Page 2

of Classroom Teachers; Judy Runnels, president of the Professional Educators Association of Lawton; Martha Wissler, president of the Edmond Association of Classroom Teachers; and TCTA President Stockley.

For example, Staples donates teacher goody bags at membership drive events, as well as other supplies such as palm pilots, leather chairs, calendars, gifts certificates and paper. The company gives cash prizes to honor outstanding achievements of both teachers and students.

Staples' hugely popular computer ink cartridge recycling program generated \$10,000 cash for school and OEA foundations earlier this year. The company expects the donations to continue rolling in.

At times, Staples has stepped in during a crisis.

In her nomination, Runnels described one such crisis in Lawton, writing, "When toxic mold was detected and teachers were evacuated from their rooms, Staples donated wall clocks and other needed supplies for teachers to use in their portable classrooms."

Opportunities for All

Brown vs. Board of Education Advanced Diane Hill's Career

By Doug Folks

May 17 marks the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*, one of public education's most important moments in history. In that 1954 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools violated the 14th Amendment. It set the wheels in motion that not only changed our schools, but our society as a whole.

Even though *Brown vs. Board of Education* is 50 years old, real integration isn't. It took *Brown II* in 1955, National Guardsmen walking African America students to school in Little Rock in 1957, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – as well as other dramatic events – to really change the face of our society. In fact, desegregation didn't come to Oklahoma until the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Diane Hill, an OEA member and a social studies teacher at Muskogee High School, had a front row seat to this state's efforts to desegregate schools. In fact, it can be said that her teaching career has been framed by *Brown*. She grew up in Muskogee's African American community during the '60s and began her teaching career in 1973, just after Muskogee integrated its public schools. She will tell you that the historic ruling provided her with a rich career.

Muskogee's Central High School and Manual Training High School joined together as Muskogee High School (MHS) in 1970. Hill says it may have been easier for Muskogee than a lot of communities, because of Muskogee's smaller size. But she also says that students of the traditional black high school were not all that eager to desegregate.

"I was part of Manual's Class of '66. We had 125 students, and the majority of those students now are teachers, doctors or lawyers. Most of us are



Diane Hill listens as Muskogee junior Willie Carter explains her entry in a social studies competition at Northeastern State in Tahlequah. The history project discusses the nine African American students who were escorted into Little Rock's Central High School by National Guard troops, working on orders from President Eisenhower. The Arkansas Nine represent a pivotal point in the South's desegregation and the implementation of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*.

professionals today," she said.

Hill said her community knew that Manual Training needed up-to-date text books, a better facility and newer furniture, but the school and its students were successful and some people didn't want to give that up.

"Even though we wanted something better, Manual was making leaps and bounds (for its students)," she said.

After high school, Hill attended college for one summer semester before she had to drop out and get a job. After nearly four years in the workforce, she went back to school fulltime, getting a teaching degree from Northeast-

ern State University in just two and a half years. In 1973, she returned to her hometown and took a teaching position at the three-year-old MHS.

While thousands of African American teachers lost their jobs when schools implemented desegregation plans, Hill says that, at least in Muskogee, *Brown* helped fuel her career.

"Things were on a roll (in Muskogee)," she said. "I think we began to see more African American teachers at all of the schools at that time. They began to hire us.

"We had more African Americans going into education (in the 1970s) and

Brown may have been the reason. (African Americans) wanted to help because they had been helped at their traditional black schools."

Hill says increased opportunities for all races were the most important outcomes of *Brown*.

"If I quit teaching, I can still go do something else. *Brown vs. Board* ruled for segregated schools in America with all deliberate speed, but it brought about a lot of civil rights cases for other things. That really made the promise of opportunity after opportunity for all of us," she said.



Diane Hill

And that's just what she wants her students to realize about the importance of this landmark case.

"I want (my students) to understand that they are unique individuals. They don't have to hold their head down for any reason whatsoever," she said.

"And since those opportunities have been fought for, take advantage of them. Don't waste them."



Combining Two Proud Pasts

The mascot for Muskogee High School (MHS) is an icon of all that *Brown vs. Board of Education* was meant to be – a combination of two segments of a community.

The official web site of MHS says, "The current Rougher mascot is a roughneck with a bulldog face symbolizing the Oklahoma oil days and the Manual High bulldog mascot." It was created by MHS students in the mid-1970s.

"The mascot is not mine and it's not yours, it's ours," said Diane Hill, who started her teaching career just three years after Muskogee integrated its schools. "And that's what we have to start thinking about, and that's what *Brown* was about. We had to learn how to compromise."

AYP is Beginning to Take Its Toll

Scores Are Up, but 46 Schools Make "Improvement" List

By Doug Folks

It was a good-news, bad-news day when the State Department of Education recently released Oklahoma's latest scores for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

The report lists scores for all state school districts and their individual schools, as required by Pres. Bush's so-called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. AYP tells parents which schools are meeting the law's strict guidelines of improving learning, and places those schools that fail to make adequate progress for two or more consecutive years on a list for improvement.

The good news was that the state's average score for 2002-03 improved to 1046 on a scale of zero to 1500. That was up from 1000, which was set for the baseline year of 2001-02.

The bad news was that 46 schools made the "school improvement" list, including 12 schools that fell on the list for the fifth consecutive time. By law, those 12 schools must start looking at drastic plans to restructure, which could include replacing all faculty and the principal, reopen as a charter school or turn over operation of the school to a private entity.

In addition, several large suburban school districts did not make adequate progress, including Norman, Putnam City, Edmond, Moore, and Midwest City-Del City in the Oklahoma City area; and Jenks, Broken Arrow, Owasso, Sand Springs and Union in Tulsa. Each district actually had overall scores well above the state average, but one of the district's subgroups (e.g. students with English as a second language or special education students) didn't score high enough on standardized tests.

In all, 376 Oklahoma schools did not make adequate yearly progress.

AYP by the Numbers

1796
Number of Oklahoma schools

376
Schools that failed
to make AYP

46
Schools listed on the
'School Improvement' list
(two or more years
of failing to make AYP)

12
Sites that face restructuring
next year if AYP not met

AYP scores are determined by comparing student scores to targets in reading (648) and math (622), percentage of students tested (95 percent required) and attendance (644 or 91.2 percent). All students combined and those in 11 different subgroups must meet the targets as well, or the district or school is deemed not meeting AYP. The subgroups identify students as economically disadvantaged, students from major racial and ethnic minority groups, students with disabilities and Limited English Proficient students.

"The suburban districts which failed to meet AYP are all districts known for their quality teachers and high academic standards," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "The fact they failed to make AYP is proof of how ludicrous NCLB is."

Bishop pointed out that Deer Creek Public Schools in northwest Oklahoma County is a good example of how

NCLB punishes good districts. Deer Creek students as a whole scored near the top in the state with 1280 and 1296 on the math and reading tests, respectively. But one subgroup scored below the reading target and the district is labeled as not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

"That's just wrong," Bishop said. "The OEA believes in accountability and high standards, and we insist on placing a quality teacher in every classroom. But Bush's NCLB is about

punishment. It's designed to ruin our public school system, not improve it."

The National Education Association is working feverishly in Washington, D.C., to bring about changes in the law, and has had some success. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige has announced three changes to the law in recent months, each allowing schools or teachers more flexibility in meeting the standards.

"With the recent changes, it's obvious
See "NEA Working" on Page 13

NEA PAC Recommends John Kerry for President

The National Education Association's Fund for Children and Public Education made a primary recommendation for John Kerry for president in late April.

The PAC Council arrived at that decision through a lengthy process, which involved members at every turn. (The Oklahoma Education Association has a similar process for state candidates.)

All of the presidential candidates were earlier asked to complete a survey and participate in an interview with NEA members. Prior to the primaries, all of the Democratic candidates for office completed the survey and participated in the interview process with NEA President Reg Weaver, who conducted the interview as chair of the Political Action Committee. As of mid-April, President Bush had not responded to NEA requests to complete the survey or schedule an interview.

Part One of the survey asks candidates to respond to 18 statements on Bush's No Child Left Behind Act, public money for private schools, employee rights and benefits, helping states in fiscal crisis, and funding to support all students. The second part requires the candidates

to respond to open ended questions that show his or her vision for public education.

After the interview process is completed, the PAC Council makes a recommendation to the NEA Board of Directors, which in turn votes on the recommendation. If approved, the recommendation is then taken to the Representative Assembly for vote by state delegates, which number nearly 10,000.

"The recommendation process is designed to evaluate a candidate's ability and will to improve public education," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "In the end, the recommendation is meant to be another piece of information that our members use to make a decision in the voting booth."

Members who would like to get involved in the OEA process of interviewing and recommending candidates for state offices and the Oklahoma legislature should call the OEA Center for Legislative and Political Organizing at 800/522-8091, or 528-7785 in central Oklahoma.

Revamped Summer Leadership Scheduled for July 28-29

Making the Case for Adequacy and Equity will be the focus of a revamped Summer Leadership Academy (SLA) this summer.

The annual leadership training has been shortened to a day and a half and runs from 1 p.m. on July 28 through 4 p.m. July 29.

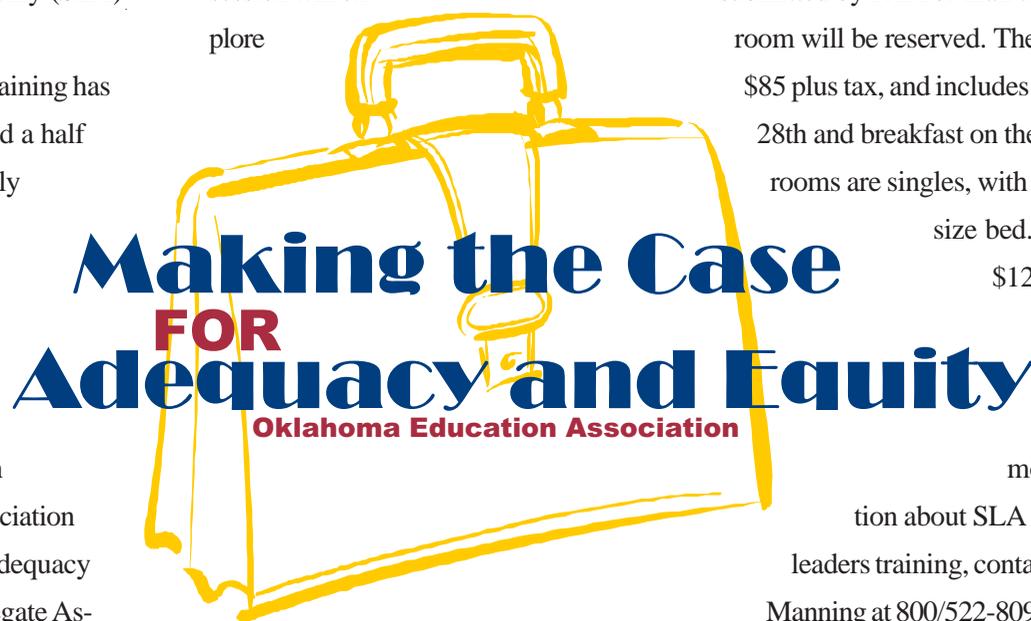
All activities will be held at the Marriott Conference Center east of Norman.

SLA will concentrate on building a strong local Association and making the case for Adequacy and Equity. At April's Delegate Assembly, members approved a plan and a budget to seek "adequate and equitable" funding for public education (see Page 1), and members will be collecting evidence to make the case.

"We wanted Summer Leadership to provide our members with a dynamic training session," said Becky Felts, OEA vice president. "I think the time we are asking our leaders to spend over those two days will be well worth it."

The opening session will provide an overview of the Adequacy and Equity Project. Immediately following the opening session, participants will be divided into three groups and attend one of three sessions that will be offered. Over the course of the day-and-a-half meeting,

each group will rotate through each of the three topic-specific trainings. Each session will explore



ways to organize around the Adequacy and Equity project by expanding our leadership base, revitalizing our membership recruitment and retention activities and organizing around local issues. One series of trainings will be held immediately following the opening session, with sessions repeating at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the 29th.

Registration for SLA is \$30, and includes all training materials, an official SLA T-shirt and lunch on the 29th. Local presidents will receive a registration packet in the mail, or registration forms can be found at www.okea.org/sla.

Lodging reservations must be made directly with the Marriott. Please utilize the reservation form provided with the

SLA packet or a downloaded version to make your reservations. Forms must be submitted by FAX or mail to assure a room will be reserved. The room rate is \$85 plus tax, and includes dinner on the 28th and breakfast on the 29th. All rooms are singles, with one queen size bed. Rates are \$120 when bringing a spouse. For more information about SLA and the new leaders training, contact Cindy Manning at 800/522-8091, 405/528-7785 or cmanning@okea.org; or visit the OEA website.

NEA Introduces Pilot Travel Benefit Partner

NEA Member Benefits is pleased to introduce Collette Vacations, a leading provider of escorted and independent tours, family cruises and weekend get-away packages.

The knowledgeable Collette staff will help you plan your trip, offer timely travel tips, and even help you decide whether an escorted tour or independent vacation is right for you. NEA members receive a 5 percent discount on the land costs of most trips.

The optional "No Worries" Trip Cancellation Waiver gives you the freedom to cancel your trip at any time, right up to the day of departure.

To learn more, visit the NEA Member Benefits website www.neamb.com or call 800/528-1923 today!

2004 Official Election Results

Below are the 2004 results of elections for a variety of Oklahoma Education Association offices.

OEA Board of Directors Races

Zone Southeast A
Judy Chaffin, Seminole EA*

Zone Southwest C
Todd Richards, Comanche EA*

Zone Tulsa Metro C
Carol Randall, Owasso EA*

Zone Northeast D
Don Ryan, Cleveland EA 289*
Jason Johnson, Dewey EA 99

Zone Northwest C
Alicia Priest, Yukon PEA 434*
Micheal B. Jones, Okeene PEA 75

OEA Delegate Assembly Races

Ethnic Minority At-Large
Marilyn Jackson, Okmulgee CTA 5,756*
Carolyn White, Idabel EA 5,480*
Shirley Nero, Porum ACT 5,255*
Lupe E. Johnson, Tulsa CTA 5,083*
Debra Hatler, Ketchum PEAK 4,416*
Monique Reed, Putnam City ACT 4,330*
Helena Gappa, Pioneer-Pleasant Vale EA 3,727*
Rosetta Y. Hortman, Tulsa CTA 3,558*
Sharon K. Hill-Wooten, Idabel EA 3,138*
Willette Sumbry DeShields, Tulsa CTA 2,597*

Administrator At-Large
Marshall Brence, Poteau EA 18*
R.P. Ashanti-Alexander, Tulsa CTA 6

Retired Delegate At-Large
Barbara Smith, Miami 292*
Theo L. Crawley, Weleetka 221*

2004 NEA Representative Assembly Races

Category I Delegate-At-Large, Southeast
Debbie Hogue-Downing, Shawnee EA 788*
Carolyn White, Idabel EA 580

Category I Delegate-At-Large, Southwest
Cheryl Dowell, Comanche EA 877*
Jane Miller, Lawton PEAL 680

Category I Delegate-At-Large, Tulsa Metro
Nancy Dowe, Broken Arrow EA 547*
Lupe E. Johnson, Tulsa CTA 508
Janet K. Stearns, Tulsa CTA 295
Rob Reck, Broken Arrow EA 199
Teresa R. Shelley, Tulsa CTA 183
Rosetta Y. Hortman, Tulsa CTA 126
Willette Sumbry DeShields, Tulsa CTA 68

Category II Delegate-At-Large
Todd Crabtree, Byng EA 4,147*
Marshall Brence, Poteau EA 2,944

Retired Delegate At-Large
Tommy Fulton, Del City 356*
Joyce Drew-Parsons, Oklahoma City 316*
Barbara Smith, Miami 259

NEA Working for Flexibility in NCLB

Continued from Page 12

ous that the Department of Education is realizing how impossible it is to meet some of these standards," Bishop said.

Still, the NEA is trying to get lawmakers to give schools more flexibility by allowing assessments other than reading and math, changing requirements for subgroups, and fully funding the law. There are more than a dozen laws currently working through Con-

gress that would address these issues and the NEA is working to get those bills passed.

According to *NEA Now*, a publication for Association representatives, more than 25 states have passed or are considering resolutions calling for full funding of NCLB, sought changes or waivers, opted out entirely, or barred state funding to implement the law.

Big Brother is Watching You

By Heath Merchen

Associate General Counsel

Q — When is the email you read and send while at work considered private?

A — Never.

Q — When is information about what websites you visit, what articles you read, or what information you enter on the computer while at work considered private?

A — Never.

Q — When is it okay to use the paper in your printer at work, the school's computer or any other school equipment to conduct your own personal business?

A — You guessed it. Never.

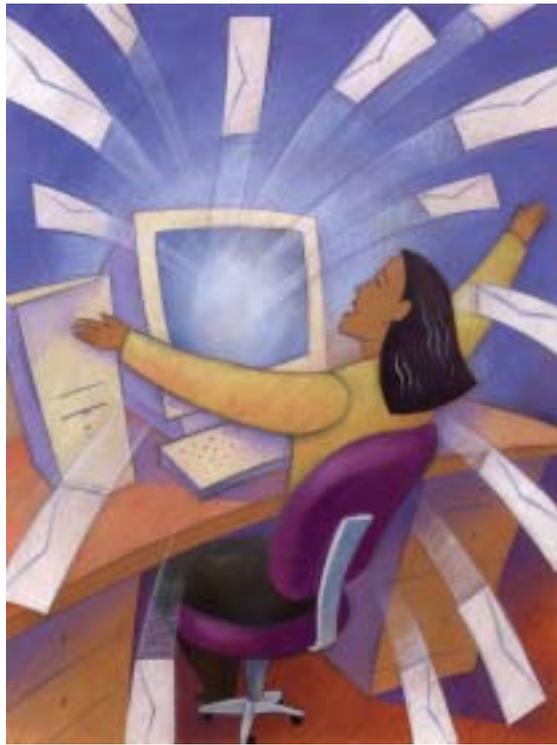
For any who disagree with the above advice, there is long list of teachers, support employees and even administrators throughout Oklahoma who have faced reprimands, suspensions and even terminations for these actions. Sadly, however, many still fail to heed our warnings and are just one click away from the same fate.

In hopes of stemming the flow of these cases, which are extremely difficult to defend since the district usually has caught the staff member red-handed, (and sometimes red-faced for those accessing more provocative websites), we have put together the following list of the four big DON'Ts regarding technology use on the job.

1. Do not use your district email for personal business.

a. This includes emailing any OEA staff member or discussing OEA or local business with other staff members.

b. In some districts the local Association has an agreement whereby notices and other generic materials can be sent by Association officials through email or the inner-office mail system and the Association pays a fee for access. Even in those



districts, the privilege should be used only by officers of the Association. If you have a need to interact with others regarding personal matters, use your personal email.

c. If using personal email, access it from home, not school. Once you access it from your school site, the district can review any personal emails you opened. In addition, many emails automatically open suggestive websites that will show up on the district's server records.

2. Do not access pornography or suggestive materials from work.

a. *The district knows what you are accessing* and your web access can be tracked with minimal effort.

b. You will get caught and you may get fired. For your sake and ours, don't do it.

3. Do not forward jokes, inspirational messages, religious messages, political messages or any other type of mass email to other staff members.

a. What is a seemingly harmless joke or inspirational quote to you may be considered an insult to someone else, resulting in a complaint, an investigation, discipline, or worse.

b. Once you forward an email,

you could be held responsible for anyone the receiving party forwards it to on down the line.

c. The bulk of emails sent regarding sympathetic tales of woe, inspirational "true stories," or warnings of imminent danger are false urban legends that have absolutely no basis in fact. Trust me, nobody in Las Vegas has ever been found unconscious in a bathtub filled with ice after having their kidney stolen (at least not according to the Las Vegas Police Department).

4. Do not send a criticism, an angry response or any kind of negative information through email, especially to your principal, superintendent or a parent.

a. Emails come across as cold, and even if you don't mean to of-



Heath Merchen

fend, offense may be taken. Such concerns are better delivered face to face.

b. If you have a gripe, talk it over with your OEA advocate before proceeding. Sadly, members have emailed some horribly insulting responses to their supervisors, students and even parents.

Please don't simply read these warnings, but heed them, as adhering to these guidelines will help keep you and your fellow staff members out of trouble. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your OEA advocate as soon as possible.

special education
automation software

developed by: 

SEAS | SEAS Web | Administration Module | Evaluation Report Writer

SEAS is a computer automated IEP program that is currently being used in over 1,250 school districts in 15 states with an estimated 40,000 users accessing the program daily.

The **SEAS** program features:

- € Faster IEP's
- € Measurable Goals & Objectives
- € Oklahoma Child Count
- € On Site In-Service Training
- € Customizable Form Groupings
- € Electronic Student Transfer Feature
- € District specific forms capability
- € Timeline Tracking
- € Free Unlimited Technical Support
- € Always Current State Mandated Forms



Save up to 2 hours per IEP!

SEAS Web offers all of the above and more...

- € Access the **SEAS** program from any computer via the Internet
- € The latest and greatest web security features
- € Assign security levels to staff



Call today for a free web demo or demo CD!

For more information contact:
Computer Automation Systems, Inc.
Toll Free: (877) 221-7327 vFax: (870) 425-6968 vE-mail: seas@computerautomation.com
Web: www.computerautomation.com



American Fidelity Assurance Company

*Providing Quality Products
and Services to the*

OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

American Fidelity Assurance Company has been providing financial security solutions to the Oklahoma Education Association since 1949. With insurance products and services developed specifically for the education employee, our commitment to the members of the Oklahoma Education Association is to continue to provide quality products and services.

- **Disability Income Insurance** • **Accident**
- **Cancer Expense Protection** • **Tax-Deferred Annuities**
- **Life Insurance** • **Long-Term Care**
- **Section 125 "Cafeteria" Plans**

 **American Fidelity
Assurance Company**

A member of the American Fidelity Group[®]

Oklahoma City Branch Office

Kacey Taylor
7510 Broadway Ext., Ste. 202 • OKC, OK 73116
(405) 416-2116 or (800) 933-1853

Tulsa Branch Office

Martha Pate
4606 S. Garnett, Ste 100 • Tulsa, OK 74146
(918) 622-6994 or (800) 365-2782

Lawton Branch Office

Kacey Taylor
1 S.W. 11th Street, Ste 195 • Lawton, OK 73501
(580) 248-0011 or (800) 288-1239

Discount
auto
insurance
for NEA
members
only.

Protecting
America's
educators for
over 50 years.

**Low rates exclusively
for NEA members like you.**

As an NEA member, you qualify for the *NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program*. It's an outstanding plan with discount rates negotiated just for you.

For over 50 years, *A+ Auto & Home Insurance Plus* has been creating unique plans for education professionals. We offer the benefits you need at rates you can afford. You could save hundreds of dollars each year.

Comprehensive coverage. From \$250 personal property coverage, which includes school supplies you've purchased; to a summer skip payment option, A+ offers unique benefits.

Guaranteed lock-in rates for a full year. While most auto insurance companies only offer six-month plans, A+ will lock you into a low rate for an entire year.

Great discount for good drivers. Educators as a group are responsible drivers. At A+, we believe that excellent driving records like yours should be rewarded with discount rates.

Excellent service. Our friendly, courteous representatives provide free quotes. And our emergency claims service is available toll-free 24-hours a day.



**Call today for a
free quote, toll-free:
1-888-744-9717.**

www.neamb.com/aplus.html

AH390504

Ponca City Member Discovers Large Insurance Savings

By Ginger Mendenhall

I have been with OEA/NEA for many years, but didn't have home and auto insurance through an NEA-endorsed company. However, I recently moved to Ponca City and bought my first house, so I checked on the coverage A+ Auto and Home insurance could provide me.

I called A+ to get a quote for my home insurance and at the same time gave them my car information to see if they could beat the price of Geico, a company I had used for several years. The first quote I received did not beat the price of the company I had. But two weeks later, quite coincidentally, I received a random call through a telemarketing promotion being conducted by A-Plus. The gentleman who called said he could give me a quote and probably get me a better deal on my insurance. I told him the story about calling previously and that the price did not beat my current rates.

Still, he felt he could do a better job for me and encouraged me to let him try again. A couple of days later, after I had pulled all of my current insurance policies out, we talked again. The agent gave me some options on how to change the coverage and save me some money. He was able to provide me more benefits with my car insurance while paying a lower deductible. And if any accident concerning my car happens on school grounds, such as door dent or key scratch, it is immediately covered (no questions or hassle, with only a \$25 deductible).

In the end, he did just what he said he would do – saving me \$510 per year on my car and \$400 per year on my house.

Obviously, I was very pleased and I

now recommend A-Plus to every teacher I know. When you talk to an A+ agent, have your current insurance policies handy so the agent can help you identify areas where you can save and so that he or she can compare apples to apples.

Editor's Note – A-Plus Auto and Home insures only NEA members, so its rates are very low. Among A-Plus's coverage highlights are:

- \$25 deductible if your car is vandalized on school property or while you are at a school function on campus or off.
- A home policy includes up to \$3,000 coverage for your own educational materials when used on school premises or in school activities off campus. This includes electronic equipment, reference books, materials, etc.
- Members with teenage drivers often find incredible savings on auto insurance. Some OEA members have saved as much as \$1,200 a year by switching to A-Plus.

For a quote on your insurance from A-Plus, members in OEA geographic regions Oklahoma City Metro, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest should call 866/387-3229. Members in the Tulsa Metro and Northeast regions should call 877/999-8941.

Tell Us Your Story

Do you have a story of how you used OEA/NEA benefits?

Write about your experience and if we print your column you will receive a \$25 gift certificate.

Stories can be from any time during your membership with the OEA. Columns should be from 400-450 words long. Email your stories to Patti Razien at prazien@okea.org.