

# OEA

An affiliate of the  
National Education Association

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*The Education Focus*

OEA's all-member publication

# The Education Focus

For the membership of the Oklahoma Education Association

September/October 2006

## Illegal collection

### Supreme Court invalidates TABOR petition

By Adrienne Covington

Once again, the efforts of the members of the Oklahoma Education Association have paid off. In late August, the Oklahoma State Supreme Court ruled the so-called Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) invalid and prevented it from reaching the ballot in November.

Computer banks were set up across the state last spring and members gave dozens of man hours after spending long days in the classroom to challenge every signature on the TABOR initiative petition.

"I'm still in awe of the efforts of our members to keep this initiative, which is pushed by outsiders, out of Oklahoma," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "TABOR is wrong for our state and for our education system. Our members proved that they will not allow radical groups to come in and push an issue that would lock education in the cellar and bankrupt other vital state services."

A coalition of business and education partners formed to challenge the failed initiative. Coalition attorneys presented evidence assembled by OEA members and others who checked petition signatures to an Oklahoma Supreme Court referee. After hearing arguments from both opponents and proponents, he recommended thousands of signatures be thrown off the petition because they were gathered illegally by circulators from outside Oklahoma, making the efforts of out-of-state petitioners invalid. A large

See "Supreme Court" on Page 3



## Toasting success!

The OEA Tulsa Metro Region team hosted "Celebration \$3000" on August 1. Local leaders discussed membership recruitment activities, negotiations and other organizational issues. Team members updated the participants on OEA services and events. The meeting ended with a toast of the bubbly (sparkling grape juice) and two thumbs up for OEA members who lobbied the legislature in favor of \$3000 – No Strings Attached! Among those attending were (standing, l-r) Barbara Slaton, Sand Springs EA; John Vaughn, Allen Bowden EA; David Stanton, Liberty Mounds EA; Bob Odle, Mounds EA; Steve Stockley, Tulsa CTA; (seated, l-r) Sue Ward, Bixby EA; Glenda Puett, Union CTA; Keri Marlin, Jenks CTA; and Denzel Kesterson, Tulsa CTA.

## OEA actions keep insurance rate increases lower than projected

By Adrienne Covington

What would you do with an extra \$300 a month? You could buy groceries, pay a bill or two, or put the money in a savings account for a summer vacation.

Thanks to Gov. Brad Henry, Oklahoma teachers now receive fully paid individual health care premiums – a savings of over \$300 per month. Thanks to the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA), health insurance premiums *will not* go up the previously projected 30 percent in January.

The Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board

(OSEEGIB) was faced with a \$41 million insurance deficit when the Board met to review the health insurance costs this summer. The deficit meant a projected 30.11 percent increase for active employees taking the Health Choice High Option and a 1 percent increase for pre-Medicare employees.

"The state was faced with a dilemma in rising health care premiums," said Roy Bishop, OEA president. "The rising need for health care throughout the nation has driven costs up and the insurance companies pass those costs on to you. Fortunately, we were able to

See "OEA worked hard" on Page 3

# Convention offers great opportunities

By Roy Bishop  
OEA President

Do you ever wonder if what you do and how you do it makes a difference? In a world where many kids start working with computers at the age of eight, receiving information at the click of a button, how do we continue to successfully engage our students while attempting to meet the increased demands of accountability?

Answering those questions, and a variety of others, is why the Oklahoma Education Association's annual convention is so important to teachers. OEA members are committed to lifelong learning. They understand the importance of the latest strategies and their utilization in the classroom.

All of us want to "create magic in our classroom." We want students to be engaged and enthusiastic about learning. In order for that to happen, we spend a great deal of time reflecting on our practice, borrowing ideas from others, attend-

ing professional development opportunities, working on advanced degrees and National Board Certification, all in an effort to provide the most conducive environment for learning.

While some of the challenges in schools are universal, there are a number of differences between rural, urban and suburban schools. Plus, sometimes these challenges can change based on the makeup of a student body from one year to the next. No matter what the challenges, as public school teachers, we teach all students who enter the public schools regardless of their readiness and/or background. We believe that every student has the basic right to attend a great public school.

The OEA convention provides sessions to help address many of these challenges. Our keynote speaker, Kay Toliver, will address successful approaches to motivating young people. Her successful career will be an inspira-



President Roy Bishop

tion to all of those in attendance.

Other teachers will get the opportunity to learn from their colleague's success through our Ed Fair program. There will be six exemplary teachers with some awesome ideas from their classrooms.

Many of our teachers will participate in professional development sessions that will update them on the latest issues in the teaching profession. Sessions dealing with the first year of teaching, truancy, child abuse, classroom management, IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and the so-called No Child Left Behind law will be just a part of the wide range of topics covered.

A number of teachers will get the opportunity to renew friendships and acquaintances they've made over the years from attending past Conventions. Those relationships have helped teachers network in their subject areas. That networking has been an invaluable tool for thousands of our attendees.

While the convention offers a variety of programs that you can read about in this issue, the OEA is committed to quality and standards throughout the year. Our work never ends when it comes to providing first-rate programs and practices. Please visit our web page at [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org) to follow the progress and success of these programs in classrooms and districts all across the state.

Our commitment to our profession puts us in the forefront of innovative teaching. Our students deserve the best and we wouldn't have it any other way.

## The Education Focus

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## Need Help?

Do you need assistance with a personnel matter? Would you like to invite an OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist to provide a training in your building? Does your local Association need organizing help? Call your regional office and ask for help.

### Oklahoma City Metro and Southwest Teams

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

### Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams

800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

### Northwest Team

800/439-0393 or 580/256-0071

### Southeast Team

800/563-4230 or 405/275-4060

## Join today!

Membership in the OEA provides security, symbolizes professionalism and brings with it a wealth of benefits.

Visit [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org) for more information, and call 800/522-8091 to find out how to join today.

# OEA

Oklahoma Education Association



## Western Heights honors OEA

Western Heights Public Schools recently recognized the Oklahoma Education Association's continued dedication of advocating for public schools and children through the Adequacy and Equity Project. The OEA filed the A&E lawsuit last January, seeking a judicial judgement on whether the Oklahoma Legislature is adequately funding education as demanded by the state constitution. Western Heights, Jenks Public Schools and Foyil Public Schools are co-plaintiffs in the suit. Pictured here with OEA President Roy Bishop (center) are Western Heights EA President Larry Fischer (left) and WHPS Superintendent Joe Kitchens.



# Supreme Court rejects TABOR, 9-0

*Continued from Page 1*

number of signatures were also invalid because the signers were not legally registered voters.

The Supreme Court reviewed the referee's report and the briefs filed by both sides' counsel. In a 9-0 vote, the Court ruled the petition failed for numerical insufficiency and because of illegal participation of out-of-state circulators. The complete Supreme Court decision on the TABOR petition will come at a later date.

"All along we've said this process was gone about illegally," said Bishop.

TABOR uses a formula based on population growth and inflation to limit state spending and, in turn, forces draconian cuts in basic public safety, edu-

cation and health services. The issue, which is also being pushed in several other states, would limit and eventually shrink public budgets.

"OEA is continually thriving to increase public education funding in Oklahoma. TABOR would have taken our efforts and thrown them in the trash and tied elected leaders' hands when it comes down to public sector funding," said Bishop.

"I'm extremely pleased with the Supreme Court's decision to rule the TABOR initiative petition invalid. We believe that every child has the basic right to a quality public education and thanks to this ruling, further investments can be made to our education system."

## OEA worked hard to keep rate increases as low as possible

*Continued from Page 1*

keep those rising costs to a minimum thanks to our determination to protect our teachers and their families."

Bishop pointed out that OEA was very proactive in trying to save members money on their insurance premiums, including:

- Sending an OEA representative to all OSEEGIB Board meetings;
- Meeting with officials from the Insurance Board and the governor's office in an effort to find ways to offset the rise in premiums;
- Sending letters to President Pro Tempore Mike Morgan, Speaker-elect Lance Cargill and Gov. Henry asking them to take steps to give relief to the education families who are responsible for spousal and dependent's premiums; and
- Requesting a supplemental appropriation be given to OSEEGIB during the first days of the next legislative session,

which begins February 5, 2007.

OEA's efforts paid off when OSEEGIB set the 2007 rates for active participants at an 18.57 percent increase – 11.43 percent lower than the projected 30 percent increase. The Insurance Board also lowered the rates for pre-Medicare participants by \$36.22 for the individual and \$29.50 for the spouse. Medicare recipients will not see an increase in their premiums in January 2007.

"This is not just an Oklahoma issue, but an issue in rising health care costs nationwide. We will continue working with the Insurance Board and elected officials to keep the health care premiums as low as possible," said Bishop.

"The OEA will also work to ensure that every teacher maintains their fully paid premiums and will work this next legislative session to obtain state paid dependent health care coverage. It is our goal to keep these rising costs at a minimum and to guarantee that teachers do not suffer the brunt of these costs."

Colorado is the only state to enact TABOR and voters last year chose to suspend the key provisions for five years. The failed initiative has virtually bankrupted Colorado – a state that holds the seventh highest per capita income in the nation. Colorado has suffered many consequences of TABOR, including:

- Falling to 47<sup>th</sup> in K-12 education funding as a share of state income;
- Bottoming out at 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation in on-time immunization rates;
- Watching high school graduation rates drop – 76 percent in 1990 to 70 percent in 2004;
- Increasing the percentage of low-income children without health insurance from 15 percent in 1991-92 to 27 percent in 2002-03. (During the same time, the national proportion of those lacking insurance declined from 21 percent to 19 percent.); and
- Experiencing a decrease in the number of probation officers and an increase in the remaining probation officers' case loads.

TABOR proponents have stated they will appeal the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruling, which is merely asking the Supreme Court to reconsider its findings.

While the program is apparently dead as far as reaching a vote of the people this November, Bishop said OEA and the state will have to continue the battle against TABOR.

"Out-of-state interests put close to \$1 million into the TABOR campaign and they are not finished. Senator Randy Brogdon has also vowed to bring TABOR legislation during this next legislative session," he said.

"Hiding behind the name *Oklahomans for Good Government* is a host of out-of-state interests looking to deplete Oklahoma's revenue. They also refer to this failed initiative as Stop-Over-Spending (SOS), which would shrink already inadequate funding in the state's public services. No matter how you look at it, TABOR should not be implemented in Oklahoma, ever."



### On the campaign trail

Steve Jarman (left), copresident of the Pauls Valley EA and chair of the Garvin County Democratic caucus, introduces Gov. Brad Henry in Pauls Valley during a stop of Henry's reelection bus tour of Oklahoma. The governor and his wife, former teacher and former OEA member Kim Henry, are seeking a second term in office. Under Henry's leadership, teacher salaries have risen dramatically under his plan to raise Oklahoma teacher pay to the regional average. In the November issue of *The Education Focus*, the OEA will publish an election primer highlighting statewide and state Senate races. Henry has been recommended for reelection by the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

# Adequacy and Equity in school funding litigation update

By *Richard Wilkinson*  
OEA General Counsel

The Oklahoma Education Association and three Oklahoma school districts – Jenks, Foyil, and Western Heights – filed a lawsuit on January 11, 2006, against the State of Oklahoma, *ex rel.* The Oklahoma Legislature, *et al.*, seeking a declaration by the Oklahoma County District Court that the Oklahoma Legislature has failed to meet its constitutional mandate to adequately fund a system of public education that provides for a basic, adequate education for all Oklahoma children.

The lawsuit also seeks injunctive relief against the Oklahoma Legislature that would require the legislature to meet its constitutional mandate and provide for a system of public education that has adequate resources to meet the educational standards that have been adopted by the State.

On July 28, 2006, Oklahoma County District Court Judge Dan Owens issued an order that granted the various Motions to Dismiss that had been filed by all of the defendants in this case. Judge Owens ruled that the allegations contained in the petition filed by the plaintiffs involved “political questions” and that the Oklahoma Legislature is the sole entity that determines whether it has met its constitutional mandate – not the judiciary.

Judge Owens also ruled that the 1987 decision of the Oklahoma Supreme Court in *Fair School Finance Council v. State of Oklahoma*, which held that the Oklahoma Constitution requires the legislature to fund a sys-

tem of education that provides a “basic, adequate education for all children in the State,” did not apply to the allegations contained in the Petition filed by the OEA and the three school dis-

## From your counsel

tricts. In his order, Judge Owens indicated that he was granting the Motions to Dismiss in order to “accommodate an immediate appeal” of the legal issues presented in this litigation.

A Petition in Error was filed in the Oklahoma Supreme Court on August 24, seeking review of the decision by Judge Owens granting the various Motions to Dismiss. The Petition in Error seeks review and reversal of the District Court decision and a remand of the case to the District Court for a trial on the merits of the allegations contained in the Petition.

Appeals from a summary disposition (which is the case here) are governed by an accelerated appeal process in the Oklahoma Supreme Court and appeals of this nature are normally decided within a few months. We are hopeful that a decision can be rendered by the end of the year and that the case will be remanded back to the District Court for a trial that would begin sometime in 2007.

We have always anticipated that this case would be reviewed by an appellate court – probably several times prior to its conclusion – and almost all of the adequacy and equity in school funding cases that have been litigated in other states have followed this course. The legal and procedural de-

fenses that were raised by the defendants in the various Motions to Dismiss are identical to those raised by defendants in other states that have been involved in school funding litigation and those defenses have, for the most part, been universally rejected by appellate courts in other states.

In view of the prior decision of the Oklahoma Supreme Court in *Fair School Finance* and the results of similar appeals in other states, we anticipate a favorable ruling from the appellate court – particularly with regard to what mandates are required



*General Counsel Richard Wilkinson*

of the Oklahoma Legislature by the Oklahoma Constitution and whether the judiciary is a proper forum to determine whether those mandates have been met.

We will provide updates on the status of the Adequacy and Equity in School Funding Litigation as events warrant and remain optimistic that we will have an opportunity to litigate these important issues on behalf of the OEA, the three school districts that have joined OEA in this litigation, and the children of Oklahoma.

## Childress brings wealth of experience to advocacy job

Sheri Childress may be the Oklahoma Education Association’s newest advocacy specialist, but she’s far from a rookie.

Childress joined OEA’s professional staff in August as an advocate for the Southwest Region. She replaced Nancy Peavler, who retired in May after 20 years with the Association.

Childress brings with her a great deal of job-specific experience. She was Norman’s first full-time release president, serving five years in the office. She also served three different terms on the OEA Board of Directors (appointed once and elected twice), and held virtually every position on the local association level including bargaining spokesperson, grievance chair and educator rights committee.

Most recently, Childress was a special education teacher at Alcott Middle School in Norman. In addition, she has taught reading, second grade, music and served as a Title I teacher with stints in Newcastle, Oakdale, Noble and Norman. She was a site Teacher of the Year twice, district teacher of year once and a state semifinalist for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year.

In addition to her Advocacy Center duties in the Southwest, Childress will serve as the primary contact for Southwest Zone D. To reach Sheri, call 800/522-8091, locally at 528-7785, or email her at [schildress@okea.org](mailto:schildress@okea.org).



*Sheri Childress*



# Kay Toliver brings secrets of her success

Creating better teachers has always been the focus of the Oklahoma Education Association's Convention. From professional development to guest speakers to networking opportunities and special presentations, giving teachers meaningful professional development is the reason for holding the annual event.

This year's event, set for October 19 at the Tulsa Convention Center, will be no different. Fittingly, the first spark of the day will be provided by a teacher; in fact, she is one of our country's most acclaimed teachers.

Kay Toliver was born and raised in East Harlem and the South Bronx, and is a "proud product" of the New York City public school system. She has bachelor's and master's degrees from Hunter College and completed graduate work in mathematics at the City College of New York.



*Kay Toliver*

Toliver taught mathematics and communication arts at P.S. 72/ East Harlem Tech for more than 30 years. Today, she is known throughout the country as a premier math teacher and someone who shares her secrets during presentations like the one she will deliver at the OEA Convention.

"My educational philosophy is simple: All students can learn," Toliver says. "It is a teacher's job to expand minds and take children from the known to unknown. I have made my classroom a place where students can talk without fear, write, manipulate ideas,

and listen. I focus upon integrating math with other curriculum areas, for I want students to begin to see that mathematics goes beyond numbers and computation."

In addition to sharing her vision personally, Toliver has created a number of educational videos while working with the Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education (FASE). The materials include the Peabody award-winning documentary "Good Morning Miss Toliver" classroom series, "The Eddie Files," and the staff development series "The Kay Toliver Files" and "Teacher Talk."

Toliver will open the 2006 Convention with a keynote address at 9:30 a.m., October 19, in the Assembly Hall on the second floor of the Tulsa Convention Center.

## Luncheon features activist-advocate Gates

One of Oklahoma's foremost authorities on the tragic 1921 Tulsa Race Riot will take the spotlight during a special luncheon at OEA's 2006 Convention.

Eddie Faye Gates, a retired Tulsa school teacher and author of three books on the "Black Experience," will share stories of her work as an author, as an activist and as an advocate for closing the achievement gap during the luncheon.

Early bird registration for the event is only \$5 if postmarked by October 5. Tickets are \$10 after October 5 and at the door. Seating is limited for the luncheon, which is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. October 19 in Conference Room A of the Tulsa Convention Center.

Make checks payable to the OEA and

send them with the RSVP coupon printed below to Sharon Moore, OEA, 10810 E 45th St., Suite 301 Tulsa, OK 74146. Contact Moore at 800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282 for more information on the luncheon.

Gates has been an educator most of her life, from her earliest memories as a preschooler helping her parents nurture and care for her younger brothers and sisters through a 22-year career as a public school teacher at Tulsa's Edison High School.

Gates' books include "Miz Lucy's Cookies," which she describes as a cultural autobiography, and "They Came Searching," which focuses on black migration to Oklahoma and to Tulsa specifically. Her latest book, "Riot on Greenwood, The Total Destruction of



*Eddie Faye Gates*

Black Wall Street," is an in-depth account of the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, the worst riot in U.S. history.

She has become an expert on the Greenwood Riot, and served on the state commission that studied the riot and possible reparations to its survivors. Gates is now an education consultant, a Holocaust education consultant and an activist working at local, state, national, and international levels.

### Lunch with Eddie Faye Gates

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Home email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of reservations \_\_\_\_ x \$5 = Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pick up tickets at the door. An email confirmation will be sent. *Sorry, no refunds.*

# Convention at a glance

**7:30 a.m. – Exhibits, Registration, Cash Prize Drawing Registration and Child Care Open**  
(Child care is in Room 2G for children ages 2 to 10. Children must be potty trained)

**9:15 a.m. – General Session – Assembly Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**OEA President Roy Bishop presiding**  
**Kay Toliver, Keynote Speaker**

**11:30 a.m. – Lunch with Author Eddie Faye Gates – Educator, Tulsa Race Riot Commission Member and Advocate for Closing the Achievement Gap**  
**Conference Room A (Ticket required, tickets on sale from 7:30–10:00 a.m.)**

## Professional Development Schedule

### Extended Sessions

#### Beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Art For All Ages (make/take) (11:30 a.m.–1:20 p.m.)	Roxy Merklin & Edana Caldwell	B South
Fantastic OK! (make/take) (11:30 a.m.–1:20 p.m.)	Linda Wilson & Mary Swanson	C South
Ready, Set, Retire! - Q&A About Retirement (11:30 a.m.–1:20 p.m.)	Joyce Drew Parsons, Trish Parker, Jacqueline Shannon	D South

#### Beginning at 1:20 p.m.

Accommodating Learning Disabled Students in the Regular Classroom (1:20 p.m.–3:20 p.m.)	Linda Modenbach and Joy Modenbach	3A
Art in the Elementary Classroom (1:20 p.m.–2:30 p.m.)	Charlene Bower & Kay Plummer	3G
Ladies' Self Defense Strategies (1:20 p.m.–2:50 p.m.)	Nick Guinn	3C

#### Beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Ed Fair (Come and Go) (1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.)		C North
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#### Beginning at 1:40 p.m.

H.A.N.D.S. (make/take) (1:40 p.m.–3:30 p.m.)	Denise Smith & Sandra Riley	C South
Teaching Kids All About Money (make/take) (1:40 p.m.–3:30 p.m.)	Sue Lynn Sasser	D South

### Regular Sessions

#### 11:30 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.

Great Expectations	Rick Pierce	2D
Identity Theft	Liz Picone	2B
National Board Certification Process	Jennifer Gambrel	2A
Top Ten Mistakes Teachers & Support Employees Make	Heath Merchen	B North
Violence Prevention	Kendra Vollmar	2C

#### 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Who Moved My HOUSSE & Other Changes Made to IDEA	Katherine Bishop & Larry Miller	3A
OSU Writing Project Gallery Walk	WP Consultants	3C

#### 1:00 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.

Grant Writing – the Basics	Gretchen Cole-Lade	2A
How to Survive the First Year of Teaching	Jen Lakely & Katy Cook	2D
Increasing Student Success with Schools Attuned	Sheryl Flowers	2C
Storytelling: A Key to the Past, to Learning and Understanding	Sheila Arnold	B North
Strategies that Help Students Achieve	Deborah Brooks	2E
The Power of a Teacher	Michael Johnson	D North
What Teachers Need to Know	Dana Kuehn	2B

#### 2:30 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.

Classroom Management – From Chaos to Calm	Paula McCullough	D North
Expanding Partnerships for Quality Out-of-School Programs	Katie Fitzgerald	2C
Raising Test Scores	Floyd Cox	2E
Stress Management	Shirley Keith, LaDonna Lacey, Melissa Boese	B North
Teaching Outdoors is Fun!	LuAnne Ashley	2B
Will Rogers Was Not Just a Cowboy!	Doug Watson	2A

**Registration for Convention and Cash Prizes CLOSES at 2:45 p.m.**

**4 p.m. - 4:45 p.m. Closing Session with Frosty Troy in Assembly Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

**Cash drawings in Exhibit Hall 10 minutes after Closing Session ends!**

## Cash prizes worth \$1,950

Only OEA members who register for the popular cash drawings are eligible to win, and they must show their membership cards when registering.

Giveaway registration is located in the middle of the Exhibit Hall. Members may sign up between 7:30 a.m. and 2:45 p.m.

Winners must be present to win one of the prizes, which are drawn 10 minutes after the closing session.

Following is a list of companies that were scheduled to provide cash prizes as of press time:

**American Fidelity**  
**\$500**

**Horace Mann**  
**\$500**

**Saturn UAW**  
**\$250**

**Data Recognition Corporation**  
**\$100**

**Houghton Mifflin Company**  
**\$100**

**NEA Member Benefits**  
**\$100**

**NEA MemberCare Long-Term Care Insurance Program**  
**\$100**

**National Teacher Associates**  
**\$100**

**Lakeshore Learning Materials**  
**\$100**

**Oklahoma Blood Institute**  
**\$100**



# Ed Fair is all about sharing

How Convention attendees experience the Ed Fair has changed for 2006, but sharing great ideas remains the sole purpose of this popular feature as it enters its fourth year.

Ed Fair participants share a lesson plan or a project that they have found successful and popular in the classroom. During their Convention presentations, the participants are able to share their ideas and handout samples or descriptions of their projects.

In the past, Ed Fair participants decorated and staffed booths all day long in the exhibit hall at Convention. But this year, the program moves to its own room for a shorter but more intense presentation. The Ed Fair will run from 1:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Room 3B of the Convention Center. Visitors will have a opportunity to see all the booths and visit with the presenters about their projects, taking home handouts from each.

Brief descriptions of this year's six Ed Fair presenters appear on this page.

## “NASA Has More For You – FREE!!”

**Darlene Black – Marlow ACT**

NASA can be a teacher's best friend when it comes to supplies, activities and projects relating to forces of flight and air transportation of the future. Darlene will inform teachers about an exciting online, multimedia website which includes “Future Flight Design.” Elementary, middle school and high school students can learn from these standards-based activities created by NASA and teachers will love the lesson plans and handouts. Grades 5-8



*Darlene Black*

## “Sink or Float”

**Amy Cantrell – Wagoner ACT**

Children really like to experiment and participate in the creation of digital books. “Sink or Float” is a constructive way for them to do those things. Many PASS objectives are met in the language arts, science, math and technology areas as students bring items from home and try to stump their classmates. It is a fun, integrated lesson that students will remember for a long time. Early Childhood (PreK-3)



*Amy Cantrell*

## “Teaching East Asia and Other Cultures”

**Christina Surber – Tulsa CTA**

There are vast opportunities for teaching Asia studies (or any culture) while integrating PASS standards into the curriculum. Teaching ideas, resources available and pre-made lesson plans will all encourage collaboration between library media specialists and classroom teachers; and they can also be adapted to whichever culture study you are involved in. Grades 1-12



*Christina Surber*

## “The Struggle for Freedom Project”

**Michelle Cullom – Tulsa CTA**

Many upper elementary and middle school students have a limited perspective of the world in which they live and the freedoms they enjoy. This project will help enlarge students' world views on liberty and freedom, and give relevance in their lives by comparing events they study in the classroom to the recent and current struggles throughout the world. Grades 5-8



*Michelle Cullom*

## “Picture Perfect Lessons”

**Carol Scott and Cheryl McInnis – Mustang EA**

Today's students exist in a world saturated with pictures and sound. If you are interested in maximizing existing technology, integrating it throughout the curriculum and greatly engaging students no matter what the age, this is for you. You can make any required curriculum “pop” with digital presentations. Grades PreK-12



*Cheryl McInnis (left) and Carol Scott*

**Emergency Phone Numbers**

**OEA Information Booth, Exhibit Area  
918/596-9012**

**Tulsa Convention Center  
918/596-7177**

# Great professional development

## From art to Will Rogers, from entry year to retirement

Following are descriptions of the workshops in alphabetical order. Compare starting and ending times in the At A Glance chart on Page 6.

### **Accommodating Learning Disabled Students in the Regular Ed Classroom • Linda Modenbach and Joy Modenbach • 1:20-3:20 p.m., Room 3A**

This session includes a video presentation of a simulation activity demonstrating learning disabilities and practical suggestions for accommodating students within the regular classroom setting. Suggestions for adapting curriculum and tests will also be shared.

### **Art Activities for All Ages • Roxy Merklin and Edana Caldwell • 11:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m., Room B South**

Reconstructed books, collages, shoe-box books, painting and printmaking can be used to integrate creative problem solving and personal expression in English, social studies, math, science and history as well as studio art. This session will demonstrate how to use a variety of adaptable techniques in your classroom – 4th grade through high school advanced placement – to reach visual and tactile learners. *(make and take)*

### **Art in the Elementary Classroom • Charlene Bower and Kay Plummer • 1:20-2:50 p.m., Room 3G**

Did one, three-hour college course in elementary art leave you feeling inadequately prepared to teach the core curriculum from the PASS standards for elementary art? Well these two “seasoned” teachers can help you understand how to incorporate the elements of art into the regular curriculum. They also will show you inexpensive materials that can be used to teach the various visual media.

### **Classroom Management – From Chaos to Calm • Paula McCullough • 2:30-3:40 p.m., Room D North**

Elementary teachers, are you looking for some strategies that help your classrooms flow smoothly? It’s never too late to try new ideas and make adjustments. Paula, a National Board Certified Teacher and experienced trainer for OEA’s “I Can Do It” classroom management professional development, will share ideas to help you spend your class time teaching instead of dealing with discipline problems.

### **Expanding School-Community Partnerships for Quality Out-of-School Programs • Katie Fitzgerald • 2:30-3:40 p.m., Room 2C**

This session, moderated by the Oklahoma Afterschool Network, will feature the latest information on what Oklahoma’s children and youth are doing during their out-of-school time, implications for schools and communities, and ideas for what schools and community partners can do to create quality out-of-school opportunities that keep kids safe and healthy, improve student achievement, and help working families. Representatives of area partnerships will share the benefits these programs have had on student learning as well as lessons they have learned. Resources for creating and sustaining a program for your students also will be discussed.

### **Grant Writing – the Basics • Gretchen Cole-Lade • 1-2:10 p.m., Room 2A**

Most districts are not able to meet every teacher’s “want list” or even the “needs list.” So how do we find more money for our classrooms? This session will cover how to find sources for grants, suggestions on writing successful grant proposals, and will also brainstorm other ideas for funding those special projects that your kids love!

### **Great Expectations – Transforming Education to Help Students Learn • Rick Pierce • 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m., Room 2D**

The research-based effectiveness of Great Expectations provides professional growth opportunities for pre-service and practicing educators. It is designed to build the knowledge and skills needed to motivate, inspire and challenge students to achieve excellence in learning and living. The methodology is an eclectic approach to teaching that encompasses the very best of what is known about teaching today.

### **Guinn Martial Arts presents Ladies’ Self Defense Strategies • Nicholas Guinn • 1:20-2:50 p.m., Room 3C**

Assault – it can happen anywhere, anytime. It may be a disgruntled student or parent after school, a burglar in your home, or a stranger as you leave the mall. What will you do if it happens to you? Come and learn a few techniques that you can use to defend yourself in case of an attack.

### **Fantastic Oklahoma! • Dr. Linda Wilson & Dr. Mary Swanson • 11:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m., Room C South**

Make it, Take it, and Use it during Oklahoma’s upcoming centennial year of 2007! This multidisciplinary session is designed for teachers working with 1st through 8th grade students. **Bring your own scissors and markers**, and you’ll leave with materials you can immediately put to use in your classroom whatever your subject area is! *(make and take)*

### **H.A.N.D.S. – Handy and Neat Discoveries in Science • Denise Smith and Sandra Riley • 1:40-3:30 p.m., Room C South**

Are you looking for science activities that are fun and focus on PASS

objectives? Ideas you can make, take and use immediately? Denise, highly trained and certified in numerous areas of science, along with Sandra, also highly trained and a National Board Certified Teacher, are looking forward to sharing these easy, inquiry-based projects with you. The session is geared for elementary teachers K-8, but can also be adapted to other age groups.

*(make & take)*

### **How to Survive the First Year of Teaching • Jen Lakely and Katy Cook • 1-2:10 p.m., Room 2D**

While definitely enjoying their first year of teaching, Jen and Katy know that “getting it all together” can sometimes be a little overwhelming. These former SOEA state officers invite all student members and first-year teachers to benefit from what they’ve experienced on how to make that first year go smoothly. A question and answer time will be included.

### **Identity Theft – What Can You Do to Prevent It? • Liz Picone • 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m., Room 2B**

Identity theft is on the rise! Your data is everywhere! Learn the preventative measures you can take to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of this crime, as well as how to protect yourself from losses in the event it does happen to you.

### **Increasing Student Success with Schools Attuned in Oklahoma • Dr. Sheryl Flowers • 1-2:10 p.m., Room 2C**

Expanded public school accountabilitys generated by new federal and state mandates are leaving educators struggling to leave no child behind. Schools Attuned is a free professional development service for public school educators. The Schools Attuned program provides teachers, administrators and parents with the keys to unlocking



student potential by recognizing, understanding and managing learning differences in their students. This research-based program in content, strategies and delivery provides “win-win” opportunities, resources and results for students, teachers and parents.

**National Board Certification Process • Jennifer Gambrell • 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m., Room 2A**

National Board Certification has been called “the best professional development I’ve ever been involved in” by some teachers. This session will walk you through the National Board Process from scholarship application to certification. You will also learn about the support the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation provides to those going through the process and how you can be selected.

**OSU Writing Project Research Gallery Walk • OSU-WP Consultants • 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Room 3C**

Come and go as you meet your colleagues from the Oklahoma State University Writing Project. Stroll through the displays of tri-folds featuring the individual teacher inquiry projects of these consultants. Visit one-on-one with experienced Oklahoma teachers about writing strategies and ideas and how you can be successful with them in your own classroom.

**Raising Test Scores • Floyd Cox • 2:30-3:40 p.m., Room 2E**

Unsatisfactory – Limited Knowledge – Satisfactory – Advanced. Do these words mean anything to you? Are all your students performing at their capability level? Do you want to raise their test scores? Attend this session to experience a real hands-on approach to improving student learning by using your own students’ test data. Learn also, how important resources like mental ability, emotional stability, physical health, support systems and role models impact the likelihood of achieving one’s goals.

**Ready – Set – Retire! • Joyce Drew Parsons, Jacqueline Shannon, and Tricia Parker • 11:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m., Room D South**

If retirement is in your not-so-distant future, this session is for you! It’s everything you want to know about retirement and aren’t sure who to ask. Representatives from the Oklahoma Retired Teachers Association, Oklahoma Teachers’ Retirement System, and Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board will address your questions.

**Strategies That Help Students Achieve • Deborah Brooks • 1-2:10 p.m., Room 2E**

Research has been collected for a number of years that indicates when teachers use certain strategies and visuals consistently with instruction, student achievement improves. Deborah will share those strategies and show you how you can help your students become better learners.

**Storytelling: A Key to the Past, to Learning and Understanding • Sheila Arnold as Betsy Ross from Colonial Williamsburg, Sponsored by Scott Foresman • 1-2:10 p.m., Room B North**

Learn from Old Bess how storytelling passed on values, beliefs and customs during the American Revolution period from one generation to the next. Listen to oral traditions that were used by elders to teach younger members of the society about their culture and how they should behave and survive the Institution of Slavery and the American Revolution.

**Stress Management • Shirley Keith, LaDonna Lacey, Melissa Boese • 2:30-3:40 p.m., Room B North**

What is stress? Well teachers surely know because we all have it, and some have more than others. This session will help you identify the cause of your stress. (It’s not always what you think it is!) You will learn how to defuse and control it with techniques and exercises that you can immediately put to use.

**Teaching Kids All About Money • Sue Lynn Sasser • 1:40-3:30 p.m., Room D South**

Credit card debt is out of control! People are spending more than they make! How can we help our students avoid being poor money managers? This session will provide a hands-on opportunity to “make and take” a class-ready presentation emphasizing various money management topics, and it will be adaptable to all grade levels. (*make & take*)

**Teaching Outdoors is Fun! • LuAnne Ashley • 2:30-3:40 p.m., Room 2B**

Take your class outdoors – the kids will love it and so will you! Some students thrive in the less-structured outdoor setting. In this session you will learn some quick and easy activities to do with your elementary students in the great Oklahoma outdoors. Information will also be shared about a great outdoor learning experience for your students away from your school site.

**The Power of the Teacher • Michael Johnson • 1-2:10 p.m., Room D North**

Come and hear a real-life cowboy remind us of what teachers are really about. Southern humorist, award-winning author, national columnist and a favorite of OEA Convention goes in years past, Dr. Johnson provides a unique blend of stories, humor and song to illustrate key behaviors of powerful teachers who touch our hearts, reach our minds and change our lives.

**Top Ten Mistakes That Teachers & Support Employees Make! • Heath Merchen • 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m., Room B North**

Heath Merchen, OEA associate general counsel, will share with participants how to avoid some situations and legal issues that could spell trouble. Teachers who have heard Heath speak on this topic say that it is informative and valuable for all teachers to hear.

**Violence Prevention: How Animals Can Make a Difference • Kendra Vollmar of the Little River Zoo • 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m., Room 2C**

Positive interactions with animals early in life help build self-esteem, self-reliance and compassion for all creatures. These lessons are key to long-term violence prevention in children and adults and this session will show you in detail how that happens.

**What Teachers Need to Know • Dana Kuehn • 1-2:10 p.m., Room 2B**

Teachers are faced with numerous legal dilemmas every day. What can be done about a child who is consistently truant? What if a child discloses abuse? Dana Kuehn, currently serving as Director of the Juvenile Division for the Tulsa County District Attorney, will outline the truancy laws, discuss child abuse issues in schools and have suggestions for teachers that may face these legal issues.

**Who Moved My HOUSSE – And Other Changes Made to IDEA • Katherine Bishop and Larry Miller • 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Room 3A**

Many special education teachers woke up on July 1, 2006, and without knowing it, no longer met OSDE’s criteria as a “Highly Qualified” educator. This session will focus on the latest changes to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) at the federal and state level and its impact on students and instruction.

**Will Rogers Was Not Just a Cowboy! • Dr. Doug Watson • 2:30-3:40 p.m., Room 2A**

“Will Rogers was not just a cowboy” previews a presentation offered by the Will Rogers Memorial Museums in Claremore to Oklahoma schools during the 2006-07 school year. Dr. Watson will present a version of this multimedia/living history program and answer questions from teachers who may want to schedule the presentation for Oklahoma history classes in their schools.

# Registration, parking and getting to Convention

## Convention is free for OEA members

The Oklahoma Education Association's annual Convention offers some of the best professional development anywhere in Oklahoma every October. And it's all free for OEA members when they show their membership card at registration.

Nonmembers must pay \$25, or may join the OEA and enter for free.

Convention registration runs from 7:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. October 19 at the Tulsa Convention Center. Only registered participants and guests are allowed in the Exhibit Hall and the breakout sessions.

## Getting there

The OEA Convention returns to the Tulsa Convention Center and the Tulsa Downtown Doubletree Hotel.

The Convention Center and the Doubletree are located across the street from each other on the west side of downtown Tulsa on West 7th Street.

**From the northeast**, take the Will Rogers Turnpike (I-44) to US-412 W (exit 34) to US-75 S/I-244 W (exit 6B) on the left toward Okmulgee. Take the 7th Street exit toward downtown. Stay straight to go onto E. 7th Street, traveling to the Doubletree at 16 W. 7th.

**From Oklahoma City and points south**, take the Turner Turnpike (I-44)

to Tulsa. Stay to the left after exiting the turnpike and take I-244 E (exit 223A) toward downtown Tulsa. Exit 4C onto 7th Street. The hotel and convention center are just a few blocks from the exit on 7th.

**From Stillwater and points west**, take the Cimarron Turnpike E, which becomes US-412 E, to I-244 E / US 412 where you exit left toward Joplin. Stay left to take US-412 E and merge onto US-75 S (exit 6B) on the left toward Okmulgee. Take the 7th Street exit toward downtown. Stay straight to go onto E. 7th Street, traveling to the Doubletree at 16 W. 7th.

**From McAlester and the southeast**, take the Indian Nation Turnpike north, which becomes US-75 North. In Tulsa, take I-244 east toward Sand Springs and Joplin, and downtown Tulsa. Exit 4C onto 7th Street. The hotel and convention center are just a few blocks from the exit on 7th.

**From east of Tulsa**, take 412 W to US-75 S/I-244 W (exit 6B) on the left toward Okmulgee. Take the 7th Street exit toward downtown. Stay straight to go onto E. 7th Street, traveling to the Doubletree at 16 W. 7th.

## Parking near Convention

Ample public event parking is available in the immediate area or within walking distance of the Tulsa Convention Center.

Public event parking at the Tulsa Convention Center Parking Garage will be at a rate of \$3 per day. There are over 1,000 parking spaces available. Additional parking is also located at the Doubletree Hotel.

## Catch the shuttle

Driving into Tulsa? You can park at a shuttle bus site and avoid the hassle of downtown parking. Shuttle buses will deliver riders to the north entrance of the Tulsa Convention Center.

Free parking and shuttle bus services will be available at Expo Square, Lot 12 at 21st and Yale. Exit Broken Arrow Expressway on Harvard or Yale northbound to 21st. Automobiles exiting on Yale will turn west on 21st and proceed to Lot 12. Crosstown Expressway traffic will exit on Harvard or Yale and proceed to 21st.

Shuttle buses will run all day beginning at 7:15 a.m. with the final departure at 5:30 p.m.

### Do you need child care?

Child care will be available in room 2G of the Convention Center from 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. for children ages 2 (toilet trained) to 10 years. Snacks will be provided. Cost is \$2 an hour per child. Parents must bring children to the room and pick them up personally.

## Staying in Tulsa

You have choices near the Convention Center should you want to stay the night. Convention rates are offered at the following hotels to OEA members:

### Downtown Doubletree Hotel

OEA Convention Headquarters  
Downtown Tulsa  
16 West 7th Street  
918/587-8000  
Rates (\$90 Single/Double Rate)

### Great Western Hotel

Downtown Tulsa  
7th and Boulder  
918/585-5898  
Rates (\$59 King or Double Rate)

## Members make sure Convention runs smoothly

Volunteers from Tulsa Metro area local associations help staff the Convention registration booths and preside over professional development sessions. A special thank you to the following locals and all the volunteers they provide:

Session presiders – Tulsa CTA.

Registration – Broken Arrow EA, Jenks CTA, Liberty-Mounds EA, Sand Springs EA, Sapulpa EA and Union CTA.

## Special interest meetings

### OEA Black Caucus

Thursday, October 19, 1 p.m. (*immediately following Lunch with Eddie Faye Gates*) Business Meeting  
**Tulsa Convention Center, Conference Room A**

### OEA Budget Hearing

Thursday, October 19, 12:45-2 p.m.  
**Downtown Doubletree Hotel, Remington Room**

### National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

Thursday, October 19, Noon-3 p.m.  
**Downtown Doubletree Hotel, Buckingham Room**

### Oklahoma Reading Association

Thursday, October 19, 8-9 a.m.  
**Downtown Doubletree Hotel, Windsor Room**

Please join Oklahoma Reading Association for a continental breakfast and a lively discussion of research-based instructional strategies in reading. One hour of staff development credit provided.

For more information visit the Oklahoma Reading Association website at [www.oklahomareadingassociation.org](http://www.oklahomareadingassociation.org).

## 2006 Convention Committee

Special thanks and recognition to Convention cochairs Patricia Mott of Tulsa and OEA Vice President Becky Felts and their hard-working committee for putting together another outstanding OEA Convention.

Becky Felts, Co-Chair, OEA Vice President  
Patricia Mott, Co-Chair, Tulsa CTA  
Joyce Allen, Guthrie ACT  
Charles Brady, Elmore City-Pernell EA  
Karen Brooks, Byng EA  
Junene Dretzke, Idabel EA

Linda Fischer, Western Heights EA  
Stephany Gooden, Moore ACT  
Terri Keck, Marlow ACT  
Jen Lakely, Beaver EA  
Sylvia Mahaffey, Professional Educators of Lawton (PEAL)  
Kim Morris, Mannford EA  
Sandra Pendergraft, Retired  
Janet Stowers, Wagoner CTA  
Kynda Yates, Student OEA, Northwestern Oklahoma State University  
Patti Ferguson, Board Liaison, Tulsa Metro B  
Debby Stine, OEA Staff Liaison

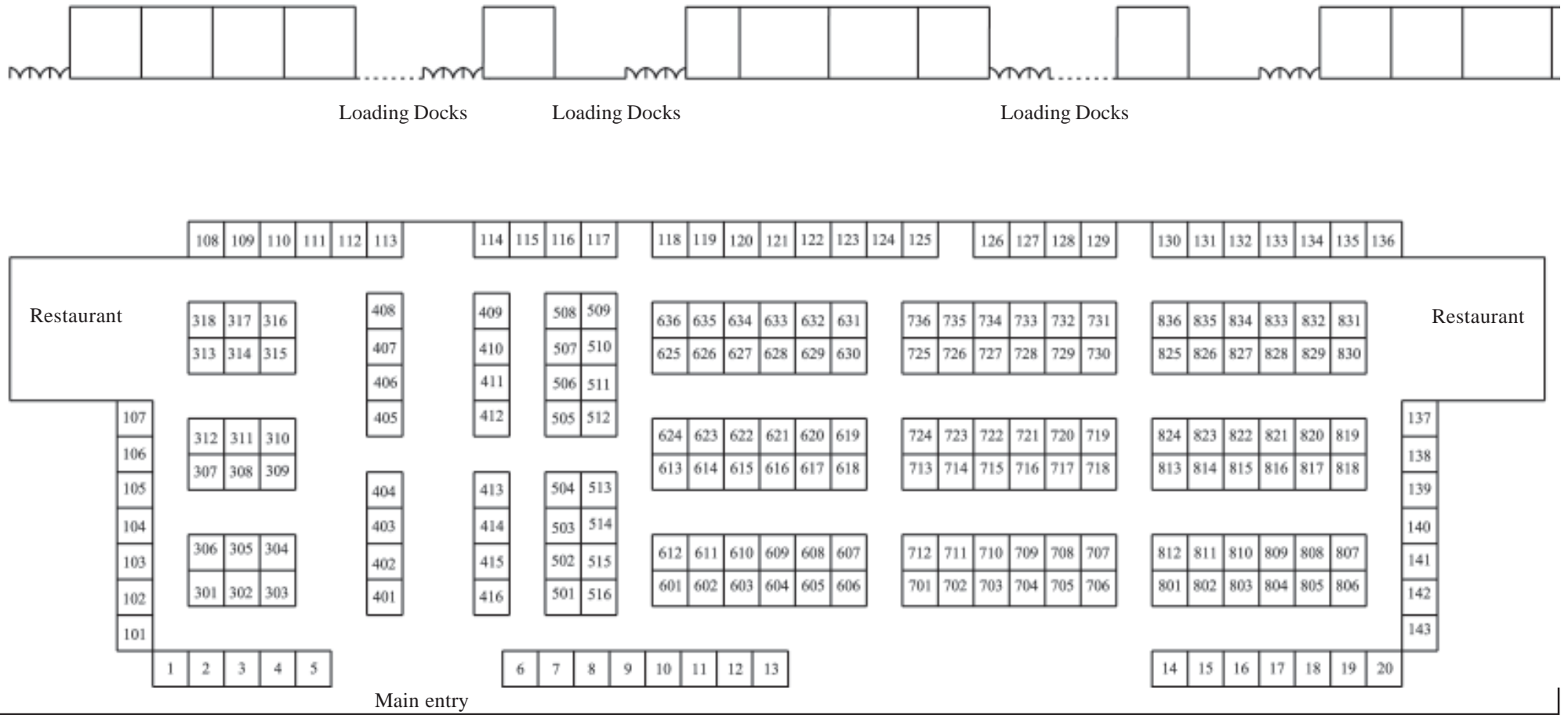


# Exhibits for everyone

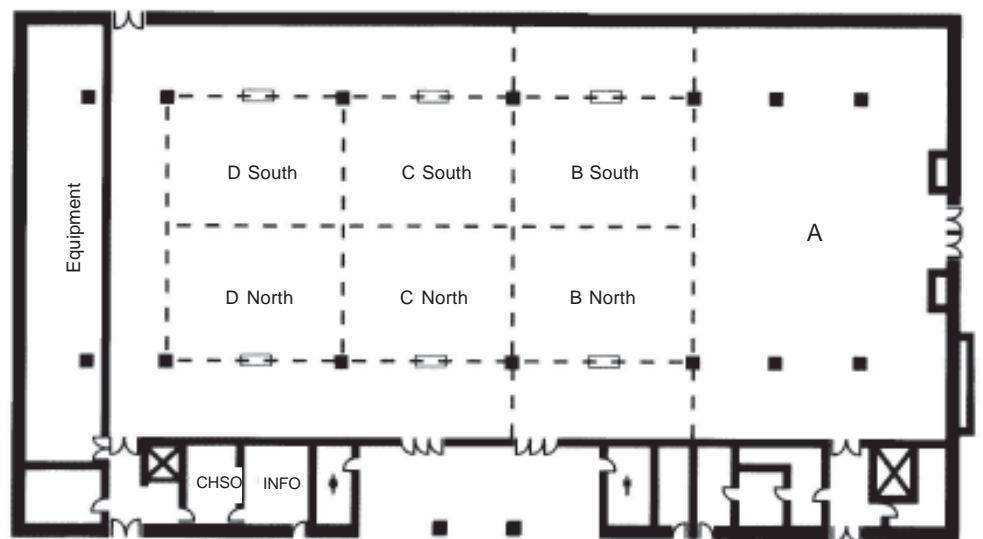
## Educational materials, gifts and services featured

"A Little Touch Up" 128	Kurzweil 3000 Reading Software 316	OSU Aviation & Space Education 106-107
AA & A Fund Raising 134	L&R Specialties, Inc 313	OSU Education Outreach 503
ABITIBI/paperretriever.com 726-727	Lakeshore Learning Materials 611-612	OSU Writing Project 705
Ag in the Classroom 116-117	Learning Disabilities 623	OSU-Okmulgee 702
AIG VALIC 414	Lisa's Xtras 140-141	OSU-Tulsa 703
American Fidelity Assurance 402-403-404	Little River Zoo 20	OU High School 506
Amish Pantry 125	Macmillan/McGraw-Hill 616	Prof. Educators' Assoc. of Lawton (PEAL) 110
Arbonne 724	Makit Products-Dallas, TX 825-826	Pearson/Scott Foresman 713-714
Arkansas River Museum 114	McDougal Littell 712	Pennies for Patients 132
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Blue Cross/Blue Shield 317	Merry Mary's 123-124	Prentice Hall 512
Bluegreen Vacation Club 136	Michael Johnson Books 16	Red Carpet Bus Charters 12
Christopher Nick 135	Mondo Publishing 801	Relax with a Spa Escape! 133
Classroom Kaleidoscopes 606	National Teacher Associates of Okla., Inc. 408	Renaissance Learning 513
Common Goal Systems, Inc. 305	NEA Auto & Home Insurance 602	Sam's Club-Sheridan Rd. 627
Cookie Lee Jewelry 131	NEA Home Financing Program 410	Saturn UAW/Staples 307-308-309-310-311-312
Curriculum Associates, Inc. 701	NEA Long-Term Care Program 409	Saxon Publishers 814
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HealthChoice 715	Oklahoma Commission For Teacher Prep. 811	Tulsa Community College 704
History By KAROLE 315	Oklahoma Council on Economic Education 17	Tulsa County Conservation 119
Holt, Rinehart & Winston 716-717	Oklahoma Department of Labor 635-636	Tulsa Teachers Credit Union 725
Horace Mann Companies 415-416	Oklahoma Disability Determination Division 634	Tulsa Technology Center 626
Houghton Mifflin 708-709	Oklahoma Educators Credit Union 413	Tulsa Zoo Friends 118
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Junior Achievement 111	Oklahoma Retired Educators 401	USDA-Natural Resources Conservation 115
Just Name It 122	Oklahoma Society of CPAs 17	Whaley Gradebook Co., Inc 301
Kaplan Early Learning Company 302	Oklahoma State Department of Education 812	Wood Crafts By Alice 108
Kincaid Coach Lines 3	Omniplex Science Museum 109	Wright Group/McGraw-Hill 615
Know-It's The Link to Reading 706	Oral Roberts University 314	Zaner-Bloser 608

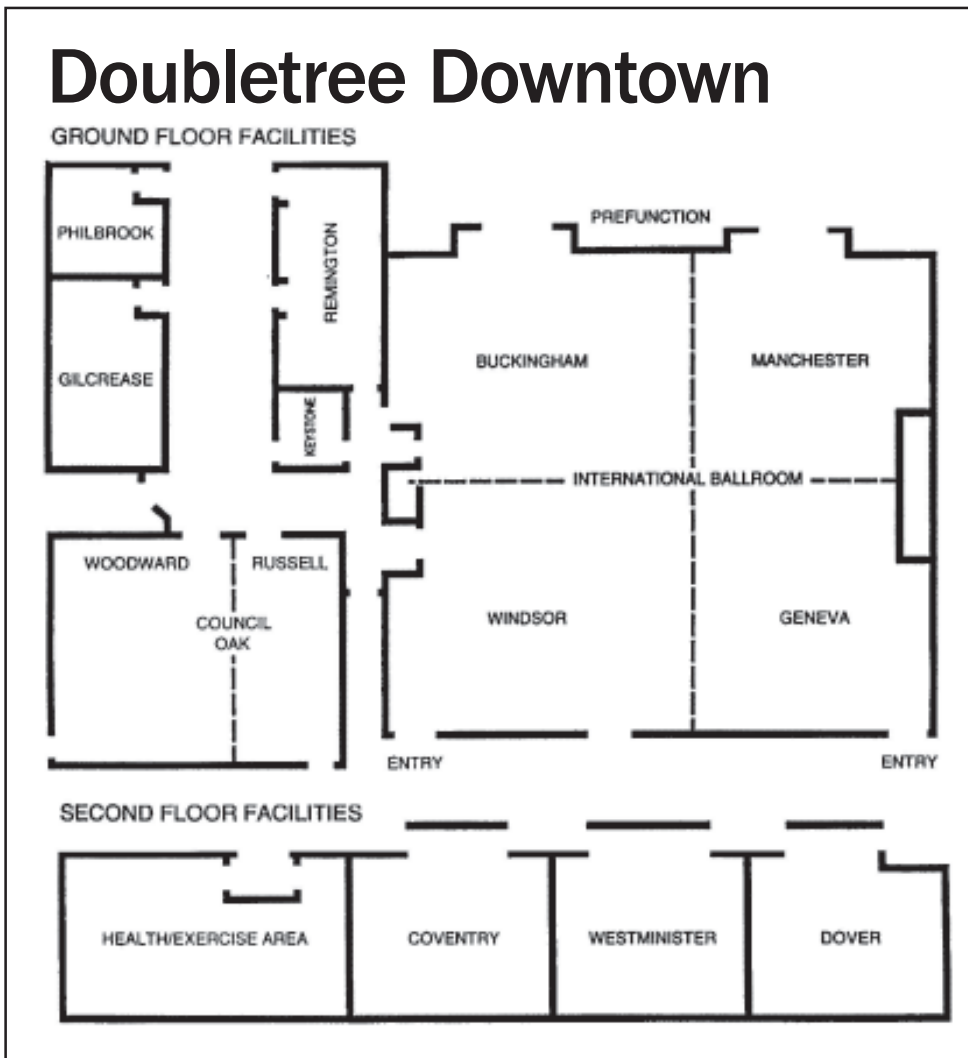
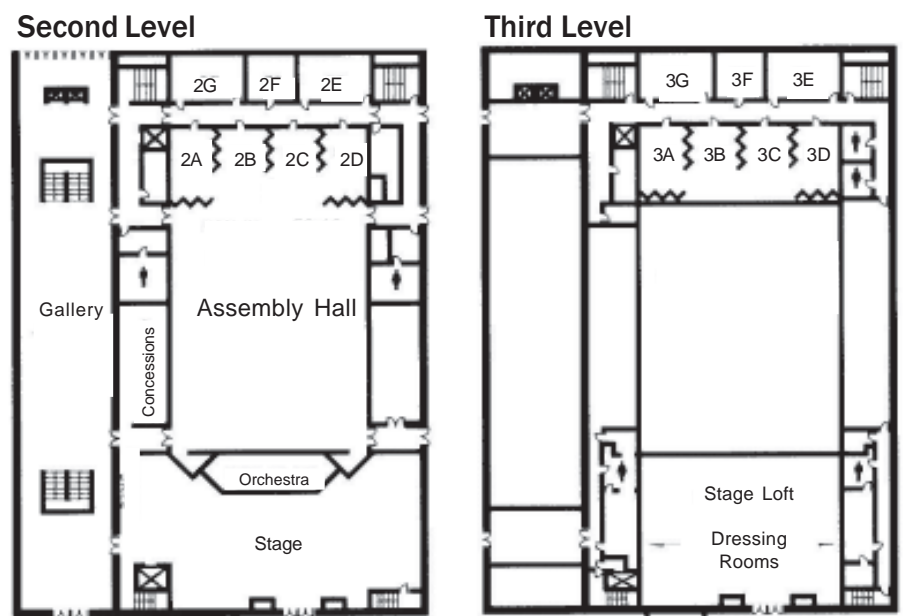
# Exhibit Hall, Convention Center



# Conference Hall, Convention Center



# Assembly Hall, Convention Center







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# Q & A with Julie Guild

## Preserve America's state history teacher of the year

By Adrienne Covington

Julie Guild has worked throughout her career to instill a sense of pride in our nation's history. That dedication was recently rewarded when the 31-year veteran was honored as Oklahoma's history teacher of the year by *Preserve America* and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade American history teacher at Carl Albert Junior High School in the Midwest City – Del City Public Schools,

Guild received a \$1,000 cash prize and is now eligible for the title of National History Teacher of the Year.

Guild's resume definitely proves that she more than deserves this prestigious award. She is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, a member of the National Council of Social Studies, the National Council for History Education, a member and former president of the Oklahoma Council of Social Studies, and past state chair for Oklahoma Close Up. Guild recently sat down with the *Education Focus* to answer a few questions.

**Education Focus: What tricks do you employ to keep your 8<sup>th</sup> grade students interested in history?**

**Julie Guild:** My biggest trick is that I never sit down. I'm always moving. I also like to tell the stories behind some of the historical events ... It really helps the students to relate.

**EF: How do you relate history events to today's kids?**

**JG:** Well, I take a concept like leadership and encourage the kids to determine what traits a leader pos-

sesses. Did George Washington have most of those traits and explain to them that he wasn't always the president and had to develop those traits. I hope that when they are old enough to vote, that they think back on these exercises in history class and can make an educated decision.

**EF: What's your favorite unit?**

**JG:** I like to teach a lot about the Civil War because there are a lot of resources. But I have been emphasizing more and more on the women in history and we discuss why women in earlier times weren't mentioned.

**EF: I notice that you have round tables instead of desks, do you think that fosters a more positive learning environment and have kids related to others they normally would not have?**

**JG:** The students have a tendency to get along better and they can help each other.

**EF: If you could be someone in history, who would you be?**

**JG:** Hmmm, I think I would like to be Madeline Albright. She was the first female Secretary of State and I bet Thomas Jefferson probably rolled over in his grave!

**EF: You're very involved in the social studies community. Why is that important to you and how does your involvement affect your students?**

**JG:** I'm currently working on Global Oklahoma where they emphasize all of the different cultures. I'm also working with Oklahoma Close Up, which is a program for 9-12 graders to show them the inner workings of state government. It gives me a chance to go out in to the community and do something for the community. I tell my students that volunteer work is part of citizenship and encourage them to get out there to volunteer as well. It helps them realize that there are so many different people who live different lives right next door.



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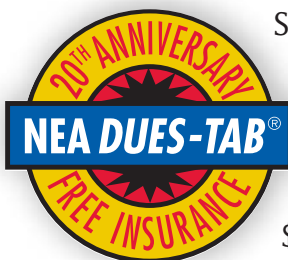
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Former Student OEA President Katy Cook and four of her fourth graders at Arrow Springs Elementary in Broken Arrow, (from left) Corbin Molyneux, Shaylah Shaw, Carter Hambleton and Katy Newton.

## Katy was well-prepared for that first day of class

By Katy Cook, Arrow Valley Elementary, Broken Arrow EA

Wow! The first couple of weeks have flown by. Since starting my teaching career at Arrow Springs Elementary in Broken Arrow I have had an exciting yet challenging time.

Let me start by saying that I felt very prepared after I left my university (Langston-Tulsa). I knew how to make excellent lesson plans, I knew how to diagnose struggling readers and had a variety of tools to assist them, and I knew that I was ready. Even with the preparation I received, I was nervous – who wouldn't be?



Here I was about to start teaching a group of fourth graders and all sorts of questions ran through my head: What if they didn't like the way I had decorated the classroom? What if they didn't like me? What if I make a mistake?

On Meet the Teacher Day, I had 14 of my 18 students (and their parents) come to meet me. Not a bad turnout I thought! It was nice to finally put a name and a face together with my kids; it also eased a little of my anxiety!

The next day was my first full day as a teacher. I didn't sleep much the night before, I was too excited. We got to know each other through a lot of different activities, including working on our "Personality Spheres," which was a great way to learn a little more about the kids. We also worked on procedures such as how to line up, walk down the hall, etc. I went over our discipline policy, too.

I only have three rules in my classroom: Be respectful, be prepared and be helpful. One student asked why there weren't more. That launched us into a conversation that resulted in them coming up with rules they wanted to add. As we discussed it, they came to realize that all of their rules fell into one of my three!

Several more days passed, then it was time for Back to School night. I remember last fall going through the evening with my cooperating teacher, Rachel Swecosky ... what an excellent example I had! That evening was a breeze for me thanks to what I had learned.

So far, the year is off to a great start and after several years of pursuing my degree, I am finally in my own classroom!

*This is the first in a series of columns by first year teachers. If you'd like to contribute a column, email Doug Folks, Education Focus Editor, at [dfolks@okea.org](mailto:dfolks@okea.org).*