

**THE
DES MOINES
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION**

T DMEA Tempo

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 3

NOVEMBER 1993

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Monday, Nov. 1
GA/LA Committee
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 2
General Elections

Monday, Nov. 8
IPD Committee
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 9
Dept. of Associates
Executive Board &
Representative Assembly
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 11
DMEA Executive Board
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturday, Nov. 12-13
ISEA Legislative Conference
Westmark Inn, Des Moines

Nov. 14-20
American Education Week
Sunday, Nov. 14
DMEA Diamond Jubilee
DMEA Office 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 15
Human Relations Committee
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 18
Faculty Representatives
North Cafeteria, 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 23
DMEA Executive Board
DMEA Office, 4:00 p.m.

Thursday & Friday, Nov. 25-26
Office closed for Thanksgiving

DMEA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

by *Walt Galvin*

Executive Director Emeritus

1918 saw the end of World War I. It also saw the beginning of the Des Moines Education Association. Now, 75 years later, the DMEA is celebrating its *Diamond Jubilee with a reception to be held at DMEA headquarters, 3116 Ingersoll, on Sunday, November 14, from 1:00 to 3:00 in the afternoon.*

One important aspect of the afternoon will be the burning of the mortgage on the headquarters building. This will take place at 2:00 p.m. I will have the honor of putting flame to the document. This goes back to 1970. As DMEA president, I was the first member to see the inside of the building as I walked through with a realtor. As DMEA president I signed both the agreement to buy and the mortgage. Coming full circle, I will have the distinction of closing the book on mortgage debt.

It is only fitting and proper that the formal closing will take place at the celebration of the DMEA's 75th anniversary. The headquarters building is a beautiful and functional edifice. DMEA members have every right to be proud of it and celebrate the jubilee in it on Sunday, November 14.

In going through some old materials, I ran across the DMEA Journal (a one-time publication) of May, 1970. As president I wrote a column. Following are two paragraphs from that long-ago piece, one from the middle of the column, the other the finishing sentences. Both seem appropriate today.

"If pride is one of the seven deadly sins, teachers driving out Ingersoll Avenue risk sinfulness each trip. After we purchased the building, but even before we moved in, I admit to glowing inwardly and smiling outwardly each time I passed. Can teachers who own and operate from such a splendid structure continue to be considered second-class citizens? Of course not. It is not as simply as buying respect, but it has become obvious in today's world that externals are very important to a great number of people. And owning our own building will be a financial savings over the years. Once again, acting collectively, teachers make a difference!"

"Twenty years from now, when I am in my teaching twilight, I hope the DMEA president invites me to the ceremony of burning the mortgage on our headquarters building. And perhaps someone will point and say, 'That old coot was president when we bought the building.'"



MARY D. LANGE

From the Director...

Use of the Martin Luther King Holiday has become a topic of contention in many buildings. October 14, a memo was sent from Tom Stokes, Don Brubaker, Barb Prior and Don Prine stating:

"The 1993-94 calendar adopted by the Board of Directors designates Monday, January 17, 1994, to observe Martin Luther King's birthday. The calendar says:

Martin Luther King birthday observance - students dismissed all day. All teachers on duty all day for staff development or work in building. District staff on duty all day.

At the present time, a variety of staff development or individual work activities are planned. Employees engaged in organized student activities observing Martin Luther King's birthday must submit an appropriate request for approval of absence utilizing professional leave from the building account.

Although the observance is during the first week of the second semester, because there is no student attendance, employees wishing to participate as individuals in observance activities may request approval of absence utilizing personal leave."

At the request of the district, Kris and I met with the administrators last spring to discuss the calendar and agreed to trade the half days teachers had for working in the building at the end of each semester so that we could honor Dr. King. Our understanding was that the "staff development or work in building" use of the day was **at the discretion of the faculty in each building**. We have heard nor seen nothing which alters that position.

Faculty members in **elementary** buildings are reminded that you now have the option of using an **early dismissal for in-service**. In order to have this benefit, the faculty needs to submit a written request to Dr. Brubaker with the reasons for the request and assurance that the faculty and SBC feel that this should take place.

Is your salary check smaller this year than last? Or is it not that much greater? There are several reasons for this sad state of affairs:

- Many of you had been receiving **Phase III monies** which the **Iowa legislature has reduced by 34%**. This is especially painful to those of you who had been accustomed to receiving the supplement for a specialist position.

- The **U.S. Congress changed income taxes**; much of that change is showing up as the withholding increases for these last four months of the year.

- When we bargained a 5.2% increase in total package benefits last spring that included a **15% increase in health insurance premiums**. This left little money in that single pool of funds for the type of salary increases we wanted and needed.

Looking back at the political decisions which have decreased members earning power is most meaningful if we can then focus on plans and actions for the future. First of all, in order to reclaim some of our losses in Phase III, we must **lobby the legislature** with evidence that Phase III activities in Des Moines have improved student learning. We must **lobby Congress** to improve the breaks given to middle income taxpayers.

The area of health insurance is very close to home and there are actions that we can and are taking at this time. The association is working diligently, along with other representative groups, on the **Health Benefits Advisory Committee**. Realizing that the task before us is monumental, we have tried to begin with those issues which are the least complicated.

The first type of coverage we are exploring with the intention of providing quality care at a reasonable price is workers compensation. The school board is being asked in an information item to send out request for proposals. At the first board meeting in November it will be on the agenda as an action item. The request is for providers to contract with the district to supply all necessary care for workers compensation claims. The anticipated cost savings, without decreasing services, should be appreciable. **We believe that one of the most important features of this approach is that it places us as a group in the role of consumers, shopping for the product we want at the price we are willing to pay.**

Next on the committee's agenda will be prescription coverage. We have also surveyed employees and now have those results to help us understand what you as consumers want to have and are willing to pay for those services. Meetings are also being held with the providers to secure evidence of the necessity of premium increases. Watch this space for further developments.



KRIS MESICEK

From the President...

American Education Week will be celebrated November 14 through 20. The week kicks off on Sunday with the DMEA Diamond Jubilee and ends on Saturday with the Large 10

Locals Bargaining Conference. We will spend Sunday celebrating how far we have come as an Association and spend Saturday planning how much farther we need to go via the collective bargaining process.

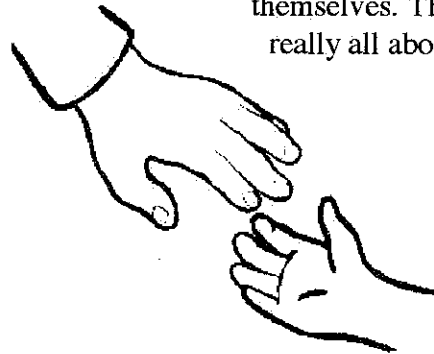
During the days in between, members of the School Board, Legislature, businesses, and the community will be working side-by-side with teachers in the classroom as part of the "Teacher for a Day" program. The Member Services/Public Relations Committee, co-chaired by Cynthia Nahas and Marilyn Jones, has done an excellent job of organizing both the Diamond Jubilee celebration and the "Teacher for a Day" program.

Also in recognition of American Education Week, the *Focus on the Classroom* report will be released. The Focus Ad Hoc Committee has spent months synthesizing the input of members and doing additional research. The resulting report clearly identifies the concerns of members as they strive to provide the highest quality education possible in light of increasing demands and fewer resources. The report includes recommendations for changes that need to take place in the Des Moines Public Schools as the first step in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Action has already begun regarding one of the areas addressed in the report: student behavior that detracts from a positive learning environment and reduces the amount of time available for teaching and learning. Last year, the Faculty Representatives voted to create an Ad Hoc Committee to examine this issue at the Elementary and Middle School levels. The committee surveyed members and compiled information that was then presented to the Administration. On October 11, co-chairs Karen Rubin and Merlin Papenheim and I met with Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Prior, and Dr. Brubaker. A district-wide task force made up of teachers, administrators and parents is being formed to make recommendations on ways

schools can improve student discipline. It is interesting that many of the points made in the recent articles on juvenile justice in the *Des Moines Register* can also be applied in our schools.

I had an opportunity to visit with a group of East High students who are interested in pursuing teaching as a career. They expressed concern about the low salaries and the pressures of the job. I had to agree that they had a point. It was gratifying to listen to them talk about teachers who have made a difference in their lives. They told of teachers who gave them confidence by helping them to believe that they really could learn and then worked with them until they grasped the difficult concepts. Their stories were not about how much curriculum they have had crammed into their heads, but of how much teachers have touched their hearts and helped them to discover who they are. Sometimes we get so caught up in test scores and the bureaucracy of school that we lose sight of the important reasons we went into teaching: touching hearts and helping kids believe in themselves. That is what teaching is really all about.



TDA BOOK AVAILABLE

We have received a copy of the National Education Association publication, Tax-Deferred Annuities: a Comparative Analysis in the DMEA office. Members wishing to review this 463 page book may check it out for a week at a time by calling the DMEA Office at 277-6271.

IPD/HR WORKSHOP

On October 8, the DMEA Instruction and Professional Development/Human Relations Committees held their annual workshop. Though attendance was not as great as last year, the participants were enthusiastic about the information they received. In the opening session, Kris Mesicek introduced members to the Record Keeping Folders which were to be delivered to all members during the following week. *editors note: Please take a close look at these folders and read the following article describing the potential use by members.* This presentation was followed by the viewing of an ISEA video production, "Dealing with Student Abuse."

Session I choices were:

- Sexual Assault: *Karen Muelhaupp*, Victim Service; teaching verbal and non-verbal strategies to prevent sexual abuse, to use in your personal/professional life and/or with students.
- Legal Issues for Educators: *Jim Smith*, ISEA; sharing ways to prevent and/or respond to allegations of abuse and/or potential legal actions.

Session II choices were:

- Financial and Retirement Planning:

*Panel presentation: Frieda Griffin
Paul Sloan
Rosa Ervin
Ken Miller*

Discussion centered on building a strong financial, ways to develop a financial plan for the future and tips in planning for retirement.

- Violent Crime: *Rich Joens*, Victim Services; teaching skills for combating violence in personal and professional lives, including strategies for de-escalation in "hot" situations.

FOLDERS FOR MEMBERS

ISEA has provided excellent folders for members to file their most important professional papers. Then the DMEA IPD/HR Committees improved them with further suggestions. These were sufficiently important that our office staff invested a full week in gluing the inserts into the folders. Please use them! Be prepared! Keep records up-to date!

The DMEA TEMPO is published monthly during the school year by the Des Moines Education Association, an affiliate of the Iowa State Education Association and the National Education Association.

President: Kris Mesicek

PROMOTING YOU & YOUR PROFESSION

Good school public relations is not just publicity. And it's certainly not show biz. It's a total program built on the cooperation of all school employees. One of the essential ingredients is "personal PR" - doing the things that are important to promote yourself as education employees such as:

- *Proudly display your qualifications to serve in your current assignment.*
- *Tell students about yourself and make them aware of your professional life.*
- *Display items that reflect you as an individual - family photos, desk ornaments, plants, books.*
- *Bring your friends and family to after-school and community activities.*
- *Write thank you notes to students, parents and colleagues. Use note paper or stationery that identifies you as an educator.*
- *Spotlight individual staff members in a building display case or bulletin board.*
- *Purchase business cards that identify you as an education employee.*
- *Don't share the frustrating aspects of your job with your friends and community acquaintances. Deal with those in a professional manner through your principal, supervisors or DMEA.*
- *Let your friends and acquaintances know about the innovative, creative, positive aspects of our schools and our professions.*
- *Use opportunities through your clubs and activities to re-ignite the belief Americans share in the importance of education - and particularly public education as a means of preserving our American ideals.*

CORRECTION

The invitation which was sent to members to attend the DMEA Jubilee was printed without one word. Instead of saying "Des Moines Education Association invites you to join us our celebration..." It should have said:

DES MOINES
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US
IN OUR
CELEBRATION OF
75 YEARS OF SERVICES.

We regret that the pressure of tight timelines conspired to produce this error.