



## Newsletter

### Officers

#### President

Michele O'Neill  
Tyl Middle School

#### Vice Presidents

Joel Fariior  
Tyl Middle School

David Gollsneider  
Montville Alternative High School

#### Treasurer

Beth Saltmarsh-Smith  
Tyl Middle School

#### Secretary

Ruth Riggs  
Tyl Middle School

#### Public Relations

Jennifer McKernan  
Montville High School

#### Membership Chair

Pat Kopycinski  
Mohegan School

#### Grievance Advocate

Julie Bateman  
Mohegan School

#### Negotiations Chair

Henry Kopij  
Montville High School

#### Legislative Contact

Lori Andersen  
Murphy Elementary

# Montville Education Association

Motivating, Educating, & Activating our Members



Volume 1, Issue 2

February 2005

## The Union Working For You

### The MEA "State of the Union" Report

By Michele O'Neill

Whenever I'm in the car, I find myself thinking about things I usually don't do on an every day basis. Recently, I found myself thinking about how busy the school year has been thus far, and I realized something that hadn't yet occurred to me. Although this has been a very busy year for your MEA representatives and officers, you may not be aware of what we have been doing. Therefore, I'd like to use this space to tell you.

First, the MEA Executive Committee applied for and received three different CEA grants. The first one was the BEST Mentor/Mentee grant in the amount of \$3,000. This grant is available to new teachers and their mentors (who have already been trained) to attend conferences or workshops and to utilize release time together to work on the Mentee's portfolio or videotaping. The second grant is a Public Relations grant in the amount of \$1,000, which we have been using to pay for the printing of the fine newsletter which you are now reading, and which we will use for the creation of an MEA website and the sponsorship of weather announcements on Q105 in the next few weeks. The third grant, the Home/School/Community partnership grant, was allotted in the amount of \$3,000. We are in the process of planning some really innovative projects using this money, and your building reps will keep you posted as soon as they are able to share the information.

Second, Dave Gollsneider, Joel Fariior and I have been meeting each month with Bill Hull to discuss school and district concerns. These meetings generally run about 1-1 1/2 hours long, and are extremely productive and amiable. Many issues

are addressed in these meetings before they ever have a chance to become problems or concerns. Whenever it benefits our members, we endeavor to work collaboratively with Bill and other district administrators towards the betterment of the district and the resolution of issues.

Each month, at least one member of the MEA Executive Committee attends the Montville Board of Education meeting and brings all pertinent information back to the committee at our monthly Executive Board meeting. Between Montville Board meetings and our own, CEA training and meetings with building administrators and/or teachers, your officers spend no fewer than 12 hours (on average) in meetings each month. They make the time for these meetings and for you because it's important to them, and even though you don't always see them in action (and if you don't, it means you don't have any reason to, and should be glad), you should know they are working hard to represent you well.

In addition, there have been many issues involving individual members that your building reps, Gayle Hooker (our UniServ rep) and I have worked to resolve before having to bring them to our Grievance Chair and past President, Julie Bateman. Personnel issues came to light on the very first day of the school year and have regularly popped up since. Because we always try to solve such issues at the building level first, we not only save money but are able to maintain a respectful professional relationship with the other unions and associations whose members also work in our schools.

It is not only important for your officers to work within the district, but with other locals within the state as well, and to that end, I have represented the MEA as your President at County Council meetings, New London County Advisory Councils and statewide Presidents' meetings. I have also been elected as the CEA Vice Chair for New London County (which

enables me to attend CEA Executive Board meetings), and the New London County representative to the Resolutions Committee. In addition, I will represent you at the CEA New Teacher conference in Cromwell on March 18<sup>th</sup>, where I will discuss how I became involved in the MEA.

There are other exciting initiatives in the works for the coming months, also. We'll keep you posted via this newsletter or email, or you could always come to an MEA Executive Committee meeting...it is never too early or too late to get involved!

As you know, being busy comes with the territory of being a successful teacher, so none of us is complaining. We just wanted you to know that even if you don't see your MEA officers, we're out there, working to protect our contract, tackle issues and assist you.

### RANDOM REMINDERS FROM YOUR UNION

**DO NOT** let your certification lapse. Not only is it costly, it can also jeopardize your position, seniority and retirement!!

**CHECK WITH THE BUSINESS OFFICE** if you are close to or thinking about retirement. There are insurance options and many other factors to consider, and they change quite a bit.

**PLEASE** read your contract if you have any questions before going to a building rep or other MEA officer. Many of your questions can be answered by reading the contract.

**DON'T FORGET** to read, initial and copy the items in your Personnel file yearly. Aren't you the least bit curious about what's in there?

**REMEMBER** to use your discretionary day before the end of the year, but NOT to extend a vacation. If you don't use it, you lose it!

## Montville Cares.....

### Montville Schools Give Holiday Cheer

The holidays can be a difficult time for less fortunate children in our community and in our state. This Christmas, many Montville school organizations helped to make Christmas very special for some of these children.

The Connecticut Education Association organizes a holiday bear project every Christmas season. Teachers all over Connecticut are able to nominate children in need, and they are also able to sponsor these nominated children by purchasing and wrapping their holiday gifts.

This year, MEA donated gifts for two children. The Montville Alternative High School

also sponsored two children. In addition, the Future Business Leaders of America donated gifts for two children, and the Class of 2007 donated gifts for one child.

### Montville Contributes to the Tsunami Victim Relief Effort

The whole Montville community recognized the need for help in Asia after the tsunami devastated many areas.

Montville High School freshman, sophomore, and junior Class Council members organized a pasta dinner and raised over \$1,200. The entire Montville community contributed to this event. Special thanks go to all who donated and volunteered their time.

At Leonard J. Tyl Middle School, students and faculty of the contributed to the school's "Wave of Hope" coin drive. Mrs. Geary's and Mrs. O'Neill's students worked collaboratively to organize the drive and count the money, and together, they raised over \$700.



The Charles E. Murphy school collected \$2,400 for the effort.

At Mohegan School, Ms. Mazalupo's third grade class donated their change and raised \$20.

## About the Contract.....

### "A View from the Other Office"

By David Gollsneider

I wanted to write to all of you to encourage you to let others know about upcoming events that are occurring in your schools. Talent shows, fundraisers, concerts, and sporting events are just a few things that you could share with others.

There are several reasons that I think this is an important thing to do. For one, most of us really have no idea about what sort of extra things are happening at the different schools. I know that each school is providing wonderful opportunities for student growth outside of the regular school day. We should

be promoting and applauding these efforts.

Secondly, our students absolutely love to have their teachers, including their former teachers, watch them perform in their activity of choice. Personally, I have some fond memories of when a former coach would come to see me play. This extra time for a child can have lasting benefits.

Thirdly, it is a chance to do healthy activities with your own family. A lot of events are free to Montville employees and their families. Others have very small admission fees. It is a superb opportunity to support Montville, to role model a positive family, as well as to spend quality time with those who mean the most to you.

I would suggest that you could communicate to others in a couple of different ways. Email is certainly a quick and effective message to get information to people. You could also send a poster or letter advertising the event to the building representative for distribution. Montville also has a public access channel with the contact person being David Blanchette, who works at Montville High School. You can also submit an article to be posted in this quarterly newsletter by contacting Jenn McKernan at Montville High School.

Let's start getting the word out to others about the great opportunities that the Montville children have!



## Important Deadlines

**March 1**—Deadline for the retraction of your retirement letter.

**March 1**—The Superintendent must be notified in writing if a teacher expects to complete work that would result in eligibility for placement on the next level of pay on the salary schedule for the next school year. When the work is completed, you must provide the Superintendent with a transcript of the credits by October 15<sup>th</sup> of the following school year.

**April 1**—If you desire to waive your medical insurance coverage, a written notice of *intention to waive* your insurance coverage must be sent to the Superintendent.

## Other Dates

**30 days prior to Sept. 1, Jan. 1, March 1 and May 1**—Notification of money deduction amount changes to any annuity plans.

**30 days prior to Sept. 1 or May 1**—Notification of changes regarding designated annuity companies.

**Child Rearing Leave**—If you have tenure and desire Child Rearing Leave, your leave shall begin within six weeks after the birth or adoption of a child.

You must apply for leave 30 days prior to the start of the requested leave. You must specify whether the leave will be for one half or one full year. Non-tenured teachers may apply, but may be affected by some restrictions.

**Conference Leave**—Requests are to be submitted to the Superintendent two weeks in advance of the conference.



### Building Representatives

Julie Bateman Pat Kopycinski <b>Mohegan Elementary</b>	Pat Davis Lin LaPierre <b>Murphy Elementary</b>	Jane Angelico Carol Keatly <b>Oakdale Elementary</b>	Rallou Clark Colin Delaney <b>Tyl Middle</b>	David Gollsneider <b>Montville Alternative High</b>	Tanya Higdon Lynn Grills Jennifer McKernan <b>Montville High</b>
--------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------