

Union News

March 2010

RFT Officers

President – Dave Skidmore

Executive VP – Lucy Thill

Elementary VP – Lahoma Jones

Secondary VP – Gary Scheff

Secretary – Susan Steinbacher

Treasurer – Jennifer Rose

Newspaper Editor – Linda Bradley

Relationships are the Key

This August will mark 6 years since I took over for Cathy McPherson as President of the Roseville Federation of Teachers. It's been an honor, privilege, challenge, and one heck-of-a learning experience. Thank you. For this math teacher, it was the ultimate problem-solving experience. I've decided to take a time out from being president, but look forward to the next chapter in my career. I plan on staying involved in our union movement.

I wish I were leaving my tenure in office with things better in public education than they were six years ago. I cannot say that. I wish I could say the future is bright, and we're on the cusp of great things happening in our schools. I cannot say that.

I can say that we made a difference. Some good and some would argue not so good. We made a difference based on the relationships we developed. The RFT has developed relationships with administration, where we mutually respect one another, and where we have open lines of communication. The relationships we've developed are not only between union and administration, but also between member and member, between members and building reps, between the RFT and the citizens of Roseville, and between our members and their representatives in Lansing.

It's imperative that we keep these relationships flourishing. As we deal with larger and more complicated issues in our school system, it's essential that we are able to face them together, listening to each other's ideas. Not that we always agree on the best avenue to solve a problem, but we have the ability to agree to disagree, voice our objections, and are still able to work together on the next issue or concern.

I thank you again for your support and commitment these past six years, and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Dave Skidmore

The Retirement Decision

Many of you may be thinking about retirement. With the changes being proposed from Lansing, it may be that you are now considering it whereas you never did before. While nothing has yet been solidified from their end, there are many things you need to take into consideration before making a concrete decision. Answering the following questions may provide some insight into how well prepared you may be to retire.

1. Do you own your own home? If not, will you have enough income to pay for it or other housing?
2. Have you planned for the future of children or others that are financially dependent on you?
3. Have you estimated how much retirement income you will receive from all sources? Is your estimate between 60 – 80% of your pre-retirement income?
4. Have you considered your future health care costs when projecting your income needs during retirement?
5. Have you saved or planned for major expenses such as home repair or an automobile purchase that you may need to make during retirement?
6. Do you plan to maintain a reserve in case of a family emergency?
7. Do you have a current estimate from Social Security of what your benefits will be and when you will be eligible for those benefits?
8. Do you have an interest that you plan to devote more time to in retirement? What will you do with all that extra time?

The more 'yes' answers you have, the more prepared you are to retire...and enjoy it! Finally, be sure to check you Annual Member Statement each year, no matter what your age.

The statement lists the wage, service and contribution amounts reported by the district during the last fiscal year. Review this for accuracy. Verify that your address and beneficiary are correct. Don't just discard the statement; keep it as a point of comparison when next year's statement arrives.

The website, www.michigan.gov/orsschools has a great deal of information. There are many helpful video presentations and a 'Benefit Estimator' that will let you play around with numbers and different scenarios before you make your final decision. There are new connections there for information on 'Pension Reform, 2010' and 'Retirement Incentive, 2010'.

Good luck!

Lahoma Jones

Recertification

Interested in recertification? Visit the following website. The DFT publication explains the process.

<http://mi.aft.org/dft231/index.cfm?action=article&articleid=7c41be49-1c3c-4ad1-8318-cc96bb0dcfb0>

Community Presence

The RFT teachers approved an advertisement for the Roseville High School Newspaper. The senior edition of the newspaper will be distributed to families who attend the **Fun Fest** on April 30. The **Fun Fest** is a free evening sponsored by the district. RFT will be handing out water bottles. The custodian union will be helping with the food. It will be an evening with games, prizes, moon walks and more!

Computer Connection

Literacy Coach, Stasi Earl has developed a website for classroom use. Students and parents can access the site from home as well. Websites are categorized by grade levels. Each grade level contains a multitude of sites exploring reading, math, science and spelling. This website is educationally based with no pop-ups. She periodically updates the **Roseville Knowledge Nook** and is looking for new educational sites to include.

Any staff members K-12 that have good websites for students, parents, or teachers, please send them to Stasi Earl at searl@roseville.k12.mi.us

Mel Miller Award

Major Mickens was selected to receive the **2010 Rise Beyond the Horizon Mel Miller Memorial Award**. The award honors a Macomb County K-12 teacher for exemplary classroom practices that encourage mutual respect and understanding, instill an appreciation of diversity, and teach students to act without prejudice.

Major Mickens has worked in Roseville for 16 years. He started as a paraprofessional and while he was a paraprofessional, he worked summers as a custodian. Major then moved to the technology department at the central administration building. Along with working Major continued his education to get his degree. Major graduated from Roseville High School in 1991, served in the Navy for 3 and one half years. He attended Macomb then transferred to Wayne State. Major just received his masters from Saginaw Valley. Congratulations!

Congratulations Teachers of the Year

Debbie Stark graduated from Central Michigan University and did her graduate work at Oakland University. She has taught every grade except second. Debbie has been involved with Kaiser's student council since it started in 1996. She is the co-chair for the reading committee at Kaiser. Debbie is a member of Kaiser's Title One team. She is one of the teacher representatives with Kaiser's PTO as well as serving on various district committees. Debbie has been married to her husband, Glen, for 34 years. They have one wonderful son, Nicholas, who is married to Sara, a teacher in the district. They are expecting their first grandchild in March! She considers herself one of the luckiest people in the world because she still loves going to school every day and working with children. Debbie truly loves what she does.

Jennifer Rosati teaches at Eastland Middle School. She teaches 7th and 8th grade Language Arts. Jennifer was also a Media Specialist for 13 years. The part of teaching she enjoys the most is making the connection with her students. Her favorite quote is *"Whatever doesn't kill you, makes you stronger!"* Her favorite books are The Her Outsiders and The Great Gatsby. Her lesson to pass along is *always to remind yourself why you went into teaching, for the kids, to make a positive difference in their young minds.*

Leroy Bjork has taught in the district for 39 years. He has coached baseball, softball, basketball, football and wrestling. He is currently teaching business and is the co-op coordinator. He says, *"It has been a great career in Roseville...thank you."*

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. ~Malcolm S. Forbes

Good Things Happening

The **Fountain** student council is sponsoring a "Hearts for Haiti" fundraising campaign. During lunchtime the student council representatives will sell school supplies and candy sporting a heart motif. The proceeds will be donated to UNICEF. **Fountain** sixth grader, Breanna Oliver from Marilyn Ellison's sixth grade will be published in this year's **Kalaidoscope 2010**, a collection of student writings assembled by the Michigan reading Association.

In December, Mrs. Huber's third graders from **Kment** have organized **Project Hope** to raise

money for breast cancer research. They sold raffle tickets to raffle off a gingerbread house. They also sold **Holiday Hellos** that were delivered to students and staff. They raised \$350 for the cause. **Kment** continues to participate in **ACES** by exercising and walking outside. Hundreds day will be celebrated with balloons, banners and doing 100 exercises to start the day. **Kment** also participated in the **St. Jude Math-a-thon** to raise \$2000.

Ms. Lamer's first grade class at **Steenland Elementary** painted windows at Culver's restaurant. **Steenland** then had a fundraiser to support the PTO and field trips. Over \$400 was raised through food sales and basket raffles. Many staff members showed up to support this event. On February 24th, **Steenland** staff held their **Parent Resource Night**. This included presentations by Mary Lou Paye, Anna Santia, Kathy Giese and Becky Barritt to provide parents with tips to provide additional home support with reading, writing, technology and organization. Staff members organized a clothing swap, food, childcare and community resources to provide additional support for parents. Isabella Averitt, student of Ms. Bradley, was chosen to have her poem published in this year's Michigan Reading Associations **Kaleidoscope** publication. She will be attending a special luncheon at Cobo Hall in March.

Principal, Judy Claseman welcomes, Mom's Club of Warren representative, Mary Congdon at Steenland Parent Resource Night.

In December, Mrs. Vickers from **Huron Park** walked with her Lower Resource Room students to the Henry Ford Continuing Care Center on Kelly to sing Christmas Carols to the senior citizens. This activity correlated with the PBS topic Respect. Also in December, **Huron Park** sponsored a **Family Movie Night**, where the movie "The Polar Express" was shown in the gym and hot chocolate and cookies were served. **Community Outreach Programs** were here to be available for families. In February, Mikalle Onyski, Resource Room teacher and Jeanne Williams, a fourth grade teacher, sponsored a clothing drive. Families were invited to "shop" at Huron Park for free for clothing for their families and themselves. The clothing was donated by Huron Park personnel and Huron Park families. The Macomb Daily even wrote an article about it. It can be found at <http://macombdaily.com/articles/2010/02/14/news/srv0000007599740.txtln>. In February, **"Animal Encounters"** came to talk about the Rain Forest. Mike, the presenter even brought some animals that included a baby alligator, a tarantula, a python, a bright green frog and a cockroach. Huron Park continues to be busy with their weekly bagel sales to benefit charity and school functions. Mrs. Gitter and Mr. Lang sponsor the **Chess Club**.

The **Eastland Middle School** 8th grade boys' basketball team went undefeated this year, with a 12-0 record. This is the 1st time in the 48 year history of Eastland that an 8th grade team has accomplished this feat. It was an outstanding group of players and young men.

Dort is having a **Typing Camp** for grades 3-6. They are having a **Whole School Book Club** for March is Reading Month. Everyone will read [Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](#). Dort hosted a **"Kindness for Kids"** in which a gently used toy collection was donated to our early childhood program and foster families. They are hosting monthly **Career Awareness** speakers as well a **Parenting Program** that consists of a parenting class per trimester. Students and staff had **"Hats for Haiti"** to help with relief efforts in Haiti. We are starting an after school program in March called the **Science Explorers Club**.

Smart Tip from Elaine Smith

Start with a clean chalkboard. When it is time to erase, she wraps a *Puffs Plus* with lotion around the eraser. Any brand with lotion should work. Erase the board as usual, and the tissue keeps the board looking clean. She uses every inch of the tissue possible and sometimes both sides to get her money's worth. Replace the tissue as needed.

Roseville Teachers Published

Schools need tax hike

I find State Rep. Kim Meltzer's commentary about education cuts to be offensive ("Blunt education cuts with cost-saving fixes," Jan. 14). She lumps all educators into one category: overpaid and doing a poor job. There are schools all over Michigan where union members have agreed to a pay freeze or a pay cut and are even paying for a portion of their health care. Many schools are doing great work with a budget that has been cut and cut and cut during the past few years. The citizens of Michigan, and especially of Macomb County, should ask Meltzer why their child's education matters less than a myopic belief in never raising taxes.

Daniel Chesher,

Director of Bands,

Roseville High School, Roseville

from the Detroit News: <http://www.detnews.com/article/20100128/OPINION01/1280337/-1/ARCHIVE/Letters--Are-teachers-scapegoats#ixzz0gsgO3OA2>

Stop targeting teachers

As a taxpaying parent and an educator, Kim Meltzer's commentary shows a real lack of knowledge of how dire the financial crisis is in the public schools across the state ("Blunt education cuts with cost-saving fixes," Jan. 14). She says that if educators across the state would just do our part and take a pay cut it would solve all the economic woes our state educational system has. Meltzer should please stop using educators as her punching bag. In her home county of Macomb, all she needs to do is look at how many school districts are facing budget cut decisions that won't just lay off a few "extra" teachers but will wipe out entire programs and push class sizes to the extremes. If the representative was really doing her job she would stop the finger-pointing, take a long hard look at what this will do to our kids and find real solutions so that Michigan can pull itself out of this crisis.

Donna M. Robinson, music educator, Mount Clemens

from the Detroit News: <http://detnews.com/article/20100202/OPINION01/2020310/-1/ARCHIVE/Letters--How-state-should-fix-schools#ixzz0gsh1hYKZ>