Sixty Days and What do You Get? …

…Two Months Older and Deeper in Debt.

More cuts for working families
as favored status for wealthy and
corporations continues

Tennessee Ernie Ford: This legislative session reminded me of Tennessee Ernie Ford and his booming baritone voice singing that grim, soulful ballad about a Kentucky coal miner’s plight of working harder (mining 16 tons of #9 coal everyday) and having less to show for it.

For sixty days, NEA-NM toiled tirelessly against an avalanche of bad legislation and even worse intentions. While we succeeded in again defeating voucher schemes, private school tuition tax credits, drastic changes to our retirement and erosion of our due process and employee rights, we were not as fortunate on the economic front. Once again, the state balanced it’s budget on the backs of public employees with an additional 1.75% forced contribution from their paychecks to their retirement fund; all the while, holding harmless the wealthiest New Mexicans and out-of-state corporations that are not paying their fair share like their smaller Mom and Pop home-grown business competition does.

All the legislative talk during the interim about seriously looking at and reining in corporate welfare in the form of tax credits, quickly dissipated under the withering glare of the new administration. These tax credits are given to businesses as an incentive to come to New Mexico. So even before they get here they are forgiven tax liability, which means less money ever making it into the state’s coffers. In many instances, these companies crisscross the country accepting a state’s largesse for a number of years until the money runs dry. Then, they threaten to leave that state unless they get here they are forgiven tax liability, which means less money ever making it into the state’s coffers. In many instances, these companies crisscross the country accepting a state’s largesse for a number of years until the money runs dry. Then, they threaten to leave that state unless their demands are met and often move to another state willing to be the next willing suitor with promises of free money.

Attempts to curb some of these giveaways didn’t gain traction and actually, more tax credits were approved and signed by the Governor when the state is desperately looking for money. A bill calling for transparency to at least study them to see if all this free money is actually creating new jobs in New Mexico was vetoed by the Governor, who ran on the need for more governmental transparency and who only seems to hate the tax credits given to the state’s film industry.

A Wall Street CEO, a Tea Party activist and a Union member go into a coffee shop.
The server puts down a plate with a dozen cookies. The CEO quickly takes eleven of them, turns to the Tea Partier and says, “Look! That Union guy is trying to take your cookie!”

Joke heard often during 2011 legislative session

Paying the Piper

Elections have consequences and the most severe were seen in the Governor’s legislative agenda for public schools and the volatility in the House of Representatives where eight very strong supporters of public schools were defeated by eight representatives who did NOT vote for any bills supported by NEA-NM and creating a razor-thin margin between parties in the House. This caused us to lose the most promising revenue measure we had, House Joint Resolution 1(HJR1). This would have allowed the voters of NM to decide whether to keep the current distribution from the land grant fund at 5.8% instead of letting it fall to 5.5% in 2013 (a loss of another$30M to our public schools) and to 5% in 2017 (an additional $45M loss to our public schools on top of the aforementioned $30M) at a time when the Governor and legislature cannot or will not raise the necessary dollars to fund our public schools sufficiently. HJR1 reached the House floor where all the Republicans voted against it and were joined by two Democrats to defeat it on a 35-35 tie vote.

Many of the proposed pieces of legislation were similar to the canned curriculums proliferating in schools where technicians able to follow a script verbatim are needed instead of teachers able to make professional decisions on student learning. Many bills, such as the tax credit bills, the grading bill, and the evaluation bill were out-of-state versions where “Florida” or “Colorado” was merely replaced with “New Mexico”. One of the former bills was actually described that way by the sponsor, as something bought off the rack at a conservative think tank’s conference. The two latter bills omitted important parts of their original other state versions-FUNDING. So, the talk about assisting schools in need of improvement by providing the needed smaller class sizes, hiring the necessary reading and math coaches, and providing for the extra professional development that the other states had done to achieve success, fell on deaf ears at the PED and Governor’s office. Recognizing schools meeting student achievement standards and rewarding those teachers of “merit” always came back to that catch-all phrase, “when funds are available” because there wasn’t even money to buy the gold star stickers for a student’s or teacher’s forehead in these bills.

Zombie Land

The popular fascination with werewolves and zombies permeating our society seems to have darkened the halls of the Capitol. This year, more bills which had been heard in a committee and tabled (read “killed”) came back to life; some over and over again as the sponsor, the party caucus or the Governor would not let a bad bill die

“Sixty Days and What do You Get?” continued on page 10
School Reform: The Talk vs. The Reality

The topic of discussion this legislative session seemed to be school reform. Not funding, not tax equity, just school reform. Or at least that’s what you would believe in reading the newspaper or listening to many media outlets. In particular, three items were given a lot of attention: retaining students in third grade, grading schools, and teacher evaluation. I will examine the proposals, the funding, the likely impact and our position.

I’ll begin with the School Grading Bill, the only one that actually did pass both the House and Senate and was signed by the Governor. The idea of having a district report card that includes measures of student learning other than AYP has been discussed by the legislature for at least 3 years now. A memorial was passed in 2008 and legislation passed in 2009 on this concept. So this is not something new or surprising. The good news is that the state will be measuring growth, so it has to be an improvement from the current pass/fail ratings of AYP. If NM was looking at multiple measures of student growth, such as short cycle assessments, student work, pre and post tests, grades and teacher developed assessments, this could be useful data. The bad news is we are probably not looking at those measures. Fifty percent of the schools grade will be based on progress is we are probably not looking at those measures. Fifty percent based on the percent of the schools grade will be based on progress assessments, this could be useful data. The bad news pre and post tests, grades and teacher developed AYP. If NM was looking at multiple measures of student improvement from the current pass/fail ratings of AYP has been discussed by the legislature report card that includes measures of student learning was signed by the Governor. The idea of having a district that will be measuring growth, so it has to be included. The other than AYP has been discussed by the legislature session seemed to be school reform.

Let’s consider the student retention bill. This proposal was improved significantly by amendments in the House Education Committee so that students could be considered for retention without parent permission only once in third grade, based on their scoring at the Beginning Steps level on the NMSBA. Interventions and supports would have been required. Funding proposed to provide interventions in kindergarten through grade three: zero. That’s correct-no funding, just another unfunded mandate. Research is quite clear on this issue: early intervention and support for students makes a difference. Retention itself does not; in fact, it leads to higher drop-out rates and greater likelihood of bullying and other social and emotional problems. We are told that this worked in Florida, where an additional $100 million per year was invested in reading coaches, professional development, curriculum and instructional materials. But in New Mexico, education funding and professional development days have been cut over the past few years in attempts to balance the budget. This is certainly not investing in students who need additional support.

Finally, let’s look at the proposed teacher evaluation legislation. While it started as a proposal we could not support, it was amended throughout the legislative process and ended up with a value added model measuring the teacher’s impact on student learning using pre and post tests of the same students in the same school year, with the same requirements for all teachers, not different requirements of growth based on the grade level or subject area. This really is a concept we can support and are willing to work on with other stakeholder groups and the Public Education Department. While the original proposal included language about a compensation system, it again had no money invested in the system. There was no money for professional development that was required, no funding for mentoring of new teachers again this year, and no funding for any additional compensation.

It’s important to keep in mind that New Mexico has been on a continual path to recruit and retain effective teachers through the Three Tier Licensure System. This was only fully implemented in 2005. NM now has differentiated indicators of competence based on a teacher’s level of licensure, something unique in teacher licensure and evaluation systems and something that has made a real difference in teaching and learning. Since these new guidelines were implemented in 2005, a 15 year veteran is no longer held to the same standard as a beginning teacher and must meet that higher standard year after year! The work we did in this area is something to be proud of and should serve as a starting point for future improvements to the system.

When we were investing in public education rather than cutting funds for classrooms, students were improving academically. For example, New Mexico’s senior class of 2010 led the nation in the percentage of low-income seniors taking and succeeding on the Advanced Placement exam and Hispanic students in the state had one of the highest participation rates in the nation (49.4%) and the highest percentage of students scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam. But continued cuts to classrooms makes a difference. Cutting positions and increasing class sizes makes a difference. Balancing the budget on the backs of school employees by cutting their take home pay makes a difference. Employees having been filling the funding gap by purchasing their own materials to support students and they simply can’t afford to do that anymore. New Mexico will continue to pay the price for sacrificing our kids’ future so that we can continue the tax giveaways to corporations while demanding no accountability or transparency from them.

There was lots of talk this legislative session about school reform, accountability and transparency. But when it came right down to it, it was just talk. Yes, the demand is there for greater accountability from teachers and public schools, but not from the recipients of corporate welfare. There were demands that schools do more with less, much less, but not an investment in our students or our educators. There was talk about shared sacrifice, but the only people asked to sacrifice in the end were public employees. The reality: the New Mexico legislature and governor chose not to make public education a priority in our state.

We can do better! We need a special session to fund public education and invest in our students. They deserve nothing less!

In unity,

Sharon Morgan
Board of Directors

Mary McGowan, President of NEA-Los Lunas, has been re-elected to a 3 year term on the NEA-NM Board representing Central Region.

Ann George, high school teacher from Farmington, has been elected to a 3 year term on the NEA-NM Board representing Northeast Region.

Bobbie Stratton, President of NEA-Cobre, has been elected to a 3 year term on the NEA-NM Board representing those locals in District 1 of Southeast Region.

Luke Stiggins, occupational therapist in the Roswell Public Schools, has been elected to a 3 year term on the NEA-NM Board representing those locals in District 2 of Southeast Region.

NEA-NM EdPAC

Steve Eisenberg from Rio Rancho has been elected to a 3 year term representing Central Region.

Bobbie Stratton from Bernalillo has been elected to a 3 year term representing Northeast/North Central Region.

Trish Ruiz from NEA-Hobbs, elected to a 3 year term on EdPAC representing District 1 of Southeast Region.

Jacqueline Grijalva of NEA-Cobre, re-elected to a 3 year term on EdPAC representing the locals outside Las Cruces in Southwest Region.

For a full listing of your NEA-NM Officers, Board and EdPAC representatives and their contact information, make sure to check your new, handy-dandy, 2011-2012 NEA-NM pocket calendar and member handbook mailed to your home in early August.

And the Winner is...

The votes have been cast and tabulated in the recent NEA-New Mexico elections.

Elections were held by NEA-NM Regions for open positions on the NEA-NM Board of Directors and on NEA-NM political action committee, EdPAC.

The envelope, please:

Delegates Trek to Windy City

This year’s NEA Representative Assembly (RA) wends its way to the Windy City of Chicago June 30- July 5, 2011. Aside from enjoying Lake Michigan, art galleries, elevated trains, Navy Pier, great pizza, Wriggly Field and Comisky Park, New Mexico’s delegation will join 10,000 other NEA school employees from across the nation and globe to chart the organization’s course through these trying and treacherous times.

Delegates will deliberate the current attacks on union rights, the looming reauthorization of ESEA, the NEA’s new anti-bullying campaign, review and adopt NEA’s resolutions along with approving the budget and voting on any new business items (usually between 80-100 are submitted) brought by individual members, local associations, or state associations. You have elected 15 state delegates of which 3 are state officers. The remaining 12 are listed below in descending order according to votes received. They, along with the cluster delegates (from locals with fewer than 76 members), will be called in that descending order to ascertain their availability to attend. See side bar for the alternate delegates who will be called in the order listed as long as there are vacancies in delegate slots.

Locals with 76 or more members are eligible to send local delegates to the RA and should have already held open nominations and secret ballot elections for those delegates. Contact your local president if you want more information about your local delegate elections.

State Delegates

Lucille Martinez-Holguin, Espanola
Diana Jackson, Alamogordo
Ann George, Farmington
Pattie Burnam, Las Cruces
Rosemary Carrasco, Carlsbad
Geraldine Franco, Carlsbad
Tammie Maxie, Lovington
Cindy Sandoval, Las Vegas
Bobbie Stratton, Bernalillo
Trish Ruiz, Hobbs
Rosalinda Carreon-Altamirano, Las Cruces
Sarah Cook, Las Cruces

Cluster Delegates

Cynthia Miranda, Gadsden
Jaime Gonzalez, Gadsden
Frances Anita de La Rosa, Gadsden
Rosalie Gonzales, Gadsden

Category II State Delegate

Kathie Davis, Las Cruces

Retired Member Delegate to RA

Carol Tewelet, Alamogordo

Alternates for RA

Alternate State Delegates

Keith Rall
Melinda Lyons
Beverly Whygles
Jacqueline Grijalva
Bethany Jarrell
Shunda Bertrand
David Chester
Patricia Duran
James Conyers
Mary Ann Chavez
Susan Garcia
David Acuna

Alternate Category II Delegates

Sabina Aguilar
Mary Lou Cameron

Alternate Retired Delegates

Betty Madrid
Nancy Harding

NEA-NM: Great Public Schools Begin With Us!

* Putting Kids First * Promoting Professional Excellence * Improving the Well-Being of School Employees

www.nea-nm.org

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Essential Leadership Cadre: Coming and Going

Current class graduates as new one begins

NEA-NM’s Essential Leadership Cadre graduates its 2011 class and greets its 2013 class at a combined leadership session slated for April 29-30, 2011 in the Santa Fe Headquarters. This two year program takes members nominated by their local, region or state leaders through an established leadership development program designed to strengthen locals and NEA-NM as graduates assume appointed and/or elected roles within NEA. “Many of our graduates are already heavily involved in their locals and NEA-NM, so they have used the program as a “Grow as you Go” model just like our state motto,” said Sharon Morgan, NEA-NM President. “Our goal is to give them the tools and skills necessary for them to be successful as NEA leaders and that they can also use effectively in their professional and personal lives,” she continued.

For more information on the ELC program please visit our website at www.nea-nm.org.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Order A Piece of Your History Today

NEA-NM Family Album to Celebrate Our 125 Years

Established as the Territorial Education Association way before New Mexico was a state, NEA-NM proudly enters its 125th birthday year this fall. In preparation, we’ve been going through our baby books, slide collections, photo envelopes, and albums to create a coffee table photography book showing who we are, where we’ve been, and what we stand for as the oldest school employee organization in New Mexico. We have a proud history of advocacy dating back to our territorial days on issues that, to this day, are still in the forefront such as student achievement, employee rights, school safety, adequate salaries, and benefits. Delegate Council will be the official celebration of our 125th birthday complete with candles, cake and congratulations from our keynote speaker, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel.

YOU can get a head start on the fun and frivolity by ordering your copy of this 100 page, spiral bound, hardcover edition at below cost pricing. We encourage locals and regions to take advantage of our multiple copy pricing and use these books as gifts to their former leaders, retired members, and Hall of Fame recipients. They will certainly be treasured and appreciated by those who have given so much to NEA-NM. Order now and make plans to celebrate with us on Saturday, November 5, 2011 at the Delegate Council, Sheraton Uptown in Albuquerque.

NEA-NM 125th Anniversary Book Order Form

Name: __________________________ Local Association: __________________________

Mailing Address: _____________________________________________________________

Home or Cell Phone: __________________ Home Email: __________________________

I want to order _____ books at $ ________ per book.

(Please add $5 shipping/handling on all orders unless arrangements can be made for delivery to an NEA-NM Field office for distribution.)

Prices: Single Copy: $20 each More than 10 Copies: $15 each 25 or more: $12 each

Return This Form with Payment (by check) to:

NEA-NM, c/o Lesley Myers, 2007 Botulph Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505

Books will first be available on November 5, 2011

Graduating Class of 2009-2011

Lucy Begay Tamara Maxie
Mary Bennett Donna Pipher
Sylvia Chacon John Reese
Nicole Coca Coy Rice
Karla Humphrey Hilda Rios
Alberto Lopez Debra Stiggins
Stephanie Ly Luke Stiggins
Terrie Maestas Theresa Ybarra
Angela Martinez

Incoming Class of 2011-2013

Jennifer Babcock Geraldine Franco
Alma Balderrama Vicki Frost
Reggie Lee Bell Jaime Gonzalez
Shunda Bertrand Jesse Harrison
Carrie Boatwright Deborah Jackson
Lateresa Brake Bethany Jarrell
Andrea Busby Kyla Johnson
Bernadette Chavez Linda Lambert
Michael R. Chavez Melinda Lyons
David Chester Melinda Miera
Jamie Clarkston Cynthia Miranda
Susan Comer Carol E. Parr
Anna Marie Crider Trish Ruiz
Denise M. Dawson Jennifer Trujillo
Brenda Dillon

NEA-NM: Great Public Schools Begin With Us! • Putting Kids First • Promoting Professional Excellence • Improving the Well-Being of School Employees

May/June 2011
www.nea-nm.org
Working with their Mouths or Setting Passionate Priorities?

By Charles Bowyer

Recently, as I was surfing the internet I found these words as the heading on a church website: “Our Passionate Priorities: Priorities. They are why we do what we do. We are passionate about our priorities -- they shape our decisions each day and how we spend our time, our thoughts and our money.” The words struck me. We all have priorities, but what about “passionate priorities?”

Every November of an even-numbered year, the voters of New Mexico might be led to believe that the politicians from all sides of the political spectrum who ask for their vote are passionate about education. At least, almost all of them say they are. Mark Twain once commented on humankind’s bent to warfare. He ended the quote by saying “... in the intervals between campaigns he washes the blood off his hands and works for ‘the universal brotherhood of man-- with his mouth.’” One might stretch the thought to those November campaigns was all the work they needed to do for public education. This winter’s legislative session was the worst example I have seen of the total failure of our policymakers to “put their money where their mouths were.” Actually, it’s not even their money; it’s ours and the rest of the taxpayers of New Mexico. In poll after poll we have told them where our “passionate priorities” are. And where they are not—protecting the tax breaks of millionaires and out-of-state corporations.

What about the Legislature’s passionate priorities? In 2008-2009, the amount appropriated for public schools through the State Equalization Guarantee was $2.432 billion. When the financial crisis struck in 2009, a solvency package introduced in the Legislature cut that funding by $72 million to $2.36 billion. A large part of that cut was directly targeted as school employees; the state swapped a 1.5% of salary contribution to retirement with employees. That is, the Legislature swapped its commitment with us, leaving employees on the hook for a $27 million dollar salary decrease.

The crisis continued into 2010, and funding was cut by an additional $254 million, $210 million of which was partly backfilled with one-time federal stimulus funds. Instead of sufficient funding, state support for our kids’ public education has continued to dramatically decline in virtually every way—down 8% as a proportion of total NM General Fund expenditures from over 50% to about 42%; and an equally devastating 8-10% reduction to the Districts’ lifeblood “Unit Value” support.

As a result of cuts implemented in the 2010-2011 funding year, state funding of the School Equalization Guarantee is now $106 million less than 2008, $213 million lower than the original appropriation for 2008-2009, and $141 million less than the solvency adjusted appropriation for 2008-2009! Add to that number the fact that a 2008 legislative authorized and funded study had determined that our schools were under funded by 15% - or roughly $354 million in that year’s real dollars.

What about passion during the 2011 legislative session? Lawmakers refused to move any revenue increases for public schools out of committee to the full body in either the House or Senate. The Senate refused to move Senate Joint Resolution 10, which would have maintained public education funding from the land grant permanent fund past its scheduled sunset and have added funding for early childhood programs. The House defeated House Joint Resolution 2, which would have simply maintained the status quo on school funding from the permanent fund. Not only were rich out-of-state corporations spared paying their fair share, so were New Mexico’s own millionaires. A Governor, who during the political campaign promised no funding cuts to public education, changed her tune at the beginning of the legislative session and promised to keep cuts away from the classroom. By the time she signed the passionless General Appropriation Act, she (and the Legislature) placed the classroom, students, and teachers squarely in the bull’s eye of targeted cuts. School employees had been the victims of another budget balancing swap of retirement contributions, reducing salaries by another 1.75% and classroom spending had been cut another 1.5% on top of the cuts described above.

Things went from bad to worse when State Education Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera announced recently that New Mexico’s K-12 system has 7,900 new education units they acknowledged, albeit sideways, that Representative Stewart’s reform efforts failed, not because they were wrong, but, rather, because of the price tag. While keeping up their performance mantra, the Journal acknowledged the funding problems by stating, “New Mexico’s education system is in a funding and performance mess.” The performance issue is complex and addressed elsewhere in this Advocate. On the performance issue, recent studies have indicated that a child’s mother’s education level may be the single most salient factor in student performance! So, on the student achievement front, we better not think we have all or even very many of the answers.

But on the “funding mess” issue we know both the cause and the solution. The cause is policymakers who work “with their mouths” for maintaining classroom support, but fail to have any passion in setting priorities for producing revenues and funding public education. The solution is a change of heart in those policymakers or new policymakers. Elections have consequences; November 2010 had dire consequences for public school employees and the children we serve. It’s time those consequences extended to those “sunshine soldiers” of November who lose their memories in the cold winter of January legislative sessions. They and the Governor have a chance to correct those mistakes. It is becoming clear that the depths of the cuts and the harm they will do were not clear as the Legislature drew to a close.

We need more funding, not rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. The only way to increase funding is to call a special session of the Legislature and ask both lawmakers and the Governor to have a change of heart and develop a “passionate priority,” for our state’s children and their public schools. We ask Governor Martinez to remember her promise to protect classrooms from budget cuts and call that special session before school year 2011-2012 is irreconcilably-compromised. She and the Legislature can have a second chance, but our state’s students don’t get a “do-over” for an indifferently funded school year.
NEA-NM’s Read Across America blew into March like... well, a 7 foot feline causing a stir across the state with Numbered Things, story hours, slow dancing and striped stovepipe hats.

For more pictures and video of 2011 NEA-NM Read Across America events please visit www.nea-nm.org.
ESP: Voices from the Field

NEA-NM’s 10th annual Education Support Professionals Conference was held April 1-2, 2011 in Las Cruces. Seventy-five ESP members from across the state gathered to discuss issues, develop leadership skills and network with their peers.

Helen Cottongim, 2010 NEA ESP of the Year. Transportation employee from Kentucky was the keynote speaker before a breakout of karaoke.

Spring Conference

NEA-NM members and leaders gathered in Santa Fe on April 16, 2011 for this year’s Spring Conference. The morning session included the latest information and happenings on the legislative/budgetary issues. During the lunch break, Mary Howard, NEA-NM Retired was recognized for her years of tireless work for NEA’s Read Across America. The afternoon allowed participants to discuss bargaining strategies and work on sample language for proposal writing.
With apologies to the late Roger Miller’s song about doing the difficult and sometimes impossible, NEA-New Mexico invites you to this year’s Summer Leadership Academy June 9-10 at Buffalo Thunder Resort and Casino, just minutes north of Santa Fe.

This year’s offerings will be sessions on beginner’s skill building for Collective Bargaining and the always popular and necessary, Employee Rights. Registration will be available on www.nea-nm.org under SLA. Again, we encourage local presidents to bring at least a team of five members from their locals who are willing to help them and their local in the 2011-2012 year. We also encourage local presidents to check with your Region Council for monetary assistance to cover registration and hotel expenses.

Finally, we encourage local presidents to attend the Presidents’ Academy on June 8, 2011 at Buffalo Thunder. And local treasurers to attend Treasurers’ Training on June 8 from 10:30 to 3:30. NEA-NM will pay for president’s lodging for the Presidents’ Academy. SLA registration fee per participant will be $90 and hotel overnights at the Hilton Inn at Buffalo Thunder are $109 per night plus tax and includes breakfast for single/double occupancy.

Come join your colleagues for networking, information, and (s)lots of fun because,

“…You can be happy if you put your mind to it. Do It, do it do it!”

**NEA MB Product of the Month**

NEA Credit Card™ with WorldPoints® rewards

If you are like most people faced with today’s economy, you’re probably looking to reduce high-interest debt and find ways to stretch your budget. Check out online at www.newcardonline.com with Priority Code VAAWB2 or call 1.888.758.7946 for more information. You’ll appreciate the NEA Difference!

- **Member Advantage:** MB acts as your advocate as long as you keep the card and remain an NEA member
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- **Member Advantage:** Earn additional cash back on top of your rewards

**Professional Growth Opportunities**

NEA ACADEMY

Advance your career with online courses – professional development and degree programs at special member-only prices. New courses and programs are added regularly...to learn more visit - www.neacademy.org

- **UMassOnline** – Members can earn an accredited online degree or certificate from one of the nation’s top-ranked universities without the constraints of a campus-based program.

**Did You Know?**

**Social Security Benefits:** Those who wait to retire until age 67 will receive 40% more in benefits and those who wait until age 70 will receive 60%.

**Consumer Tips of the Month**

- **Thinking of buying a house?** Financial adviser Suze Orman recommends that you should be able to put 20% down and have established an eight month emergency fund.
- **Preapproval vs Prequalification:** Preapproval (your lender’s written agreement to finance your home purchase up to a specific amount subject to certain conditions) can be a great advantage for anyone buying a home, and can be especially useful for buyers: looking for their first home, are self-employed, or who work on commission. To learn more, call the NEA Home Financing Program at 1.800.632.4968 to speak with a home mortgage consultant.

**NEA MB Click & Save**

**Hot Deals & Discounts**

- Runway Magazine Free Subscription – Take advantage of this special deal for NEA members by going to www.neamb.com/freerunway
- Brooks Brothers – 25% Off
- Endless Shoes – 25% $100
- Target - $7 off $70
- Red Roof Inn – 20% nationwide discount
- Costco – Join today and receive coupons for free products & other great savings valued at more than $50

**NEA Member Benefits**

“YOUR DEDICATION DRIVES OURS!”

neamb.com

**$2,000 Scholarship Drawings**

NEA Member Benefits has teamed up with Sallie Mae, provider of the NEA Smart Option Student Loan Program to offer NEA members six chances to win $2,000 in cash! (From May through August 2011 members can enter each month at www.neamb.com/prize or call 1.800.637.4636)
Tell your wallet to bring a friend

As NEA members, we need to stick together. So don’t keep all the savings available from neamb.com a secret. Tell a fellow member, and their wallet will thank you. And if you haven’t discovered the savings for yourself, you owe it to your own wallet to check out the deals for members on everything from refrigerators to refinancing.

Register to start saving at neamb.com
President Profile

Laura’s Law: an Overview of Overstreet in REA

A funny thing happened on the way to law school for Laura Overstreet; she fell in love with the kids she was teaching on what she thought was a mere stopover in the classroom. Having received an Associate’s degree and worked as a paralegal, Laura has also graduated with a Bachelor degree in both Business and Education, topping them off with a Masters in Curriculum & Instruction. This preparation seems to have firmly ensconced her as a Special Education Resource teacher about to complete her eighth year with the Roswell Public Schools.

Almost from the beginning of her teaching career, Laura became active in NEA with her local, the Roswell Education Association (REA) and with her mom and colleague, Yvette, became part of a few Mother-Daughter delegate duos at the NEA Representative Assembly. Laura has taken the opportunity to learn more about her NEA by attending conferences, leadership academies and emerging leader seminars to hone her skills and prepare her for the task she has undertaken this year—president of REA. Her reason for running for president was simple; she wanted REA to continue being a strong local union. To that end, she has worked hard this year on increasing membership, uniting and involving her members, and continuing to bargain a fair and effective contract for employees.

While she enjoys the classroom and her Association challenges, Laura finds reprieve in shopping at the mall, going to a movie, or whipping up an epicurean delight in her kitchen. And when she’s not in the classroom or in the kitchen you will find her working hard for her members because she values the protection NEA provides them as they work with the students of Roswell.

 NEA-NM members at Santa Fe’s Monte del Sol Charter School decided to go green with the help of an NEA grant sponsored by Target Stores. Joan Henderson applied for the NEA grant to improve their hoop greenhouse to extend their growing season. She was one of fifty-five recipients nationwide and the only one in New Mexico to receive the $1,000 grant. With the help of fellow NEA member, Andrea Cermanski and her class, the students were recently featured in a SF New Mexican photo putting the new plastic on the greenhouse. The NEA members at Monte del Sol are working with NEA-NM staff person, Pat Chavez, to become the second charter school in New Mexico with a collective bargaining contract under NEA. Joan says, “I am glad we got the NEA credit in the photo! Great PR for our school, our garden, and NEA.”

That’s right: go NEA, go green and go bargain.

Milestone

We note the passing of James D. “Jim” Stewart on February 27, 2011. James was a teacher in Hobbs for thirty-four years and served as President of the New Mexico Education Association (now NEA-New Mexico) in 1965-66. Our condolences have been extended to his family in Crane, Texas.

“Sixty Days and What Do You Get? …” continued

and attempts were made—some successful—to blast it to the Floor for reconsideration. As late as the night before the end of the session, NEA-NM was busy patrolling the graveyard making sure bills to diminish your retirement, your due process rights or your bargaining rights would not escape their crypt. Even with the session over, the Governor has made it clear that her failed bills—ending school promotion and teacher/principal evaluations—will be continued in some form or fashion in this year’s special session for legislative redistricting, in next year’s 30 day session and, in the meantime, through PED rules and regulations proposed by her yet-to-be-confirmed Secretary of Education designate. It is imperative that you keep this in mind as your local goes to the bargaining table this spring that you clarify and strengthen these sections of your contract.

Post Script: “Count Ability”

Just to add insult to injury, two weeks after the end of the session the Secretary had a conference call with superintendents where she announced about 8000 “units” had been “lost” during the session and had just been found. Remember, school districts generate funds through their number of units. A regular education fourth grader is equal to about 1 unit while a kindergarten or high school student is more than a unit because educating either of them costs more. So the state budget was passed with cuts for a smaller number of units and now that the missing units have been found, they will be added to the budget meaning more pieces out of an already smaller pie and consequently, less funding for each piece. The Governor who had promised not to cut education funding, has signed the budget as is, thus causing another $20M in cuts statewide and she’s been mum on ways she can make up for this extra and unexpected loss of funding. At a time when everyone is screaming for more “Accountability” from each and every frazzled school employee, it would be helpful to have someone with “Count Ability”.

Overall, NEA-NM was present and accounted for all 60 days; early in the mornings and late into some nights; in the official committee hearings testifying; and in the unofficial back room meetings trying to shape and refine legislation both good and bad for the betterment of our students and our public school employees.

Outside the Capitol, those 60 days contained the shooting of a Congresswoman; demonstrations against dictators in Egypt, Wisconsin, Syria, Ohio, and Libya; natural and man-made destruction in Japan; along with a crippling freeze, unexplained gas outage and devastating fires in our own state. In comparison to other parts of the globe and other parts of our country, we will survive this legislative session, political climate, and economic downturn just as we have many times in our past. The difference is in prior years we have counted on our union colleagues in other states to keep bad things from happening to them so they don’t spring up in New Mexico. That is no longer the case as the fight to survive is being waged in those states with the strongest and longest progressive and union traditions. It is now up to us, NEA-New Mexico and our fellow union brothers and sisters, to keep bad things from happening to us while supporting our colleagues as much as possible because, after all, that’s what UNION is all about.

~ Eduardo Holguin

For a complete listing of all education related bills which passed, failed to pass, vetoed or signed by the Governor visit www.nea-nm.org and click on the Legislative Session Wrap-up.

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REGISTRATION: the registration fee: two days: $90, one day: $50 (There is NO registration fee for presidents or treasurers for their 1-day training session, or for the ELC Class of 2011-2013.) Registration Fee is to help defray the cost of meals and must be received by May 27. Registration fees will not be refunded for cancellations after June 1. Check with your local association president to see if financial assistance is available to help cover costs, including registration, hotel, and transportation.

SEND REGISTRATION FEE TO: NEA-NM: c/o Edie Brycelea • 2007 Botulph Road • Santa Fe, NM 87505

LODGING: A group rate of $109 single or double, plus tax (includes NEA-NM group breakfast) has been secured for a block of rooms at the Buffalo Thunder Resort, reservations must be made by May 14. Contact the hotel directly by calling, 1-800-HILTONS (1-800-445-8667) and identify yourself as NEA.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8
9 AM – 12 PM: New Local Presidents Orientation
12 – 4 PM: All Local Presidents’ Academy
10:30 AM – 3:30 PM: Local Treasurers’ Training
5:30 PM: Welcome BBQ for Presidents & SLA Participants

THURSDAY, JUNE 9
9 AM – 4 PM: NEA-NM Summer Leadership Academy
Session Choices:
1: Collective Bargaining (Part 1)
2: Employee Rights (Part 1)
3: ELC Session 1 (for ELC class of 2011-2013 ONLY)
5:30 PM: NEA FCPE Reception

FRIDAY, JUNE 10
9 AM – 4 PM: NEA-NM Summer Leadership Academy
Session Choices:
1: Collective Bargaining (Part 2)
2: Employee Rights (Part 2)
3: ELC Session 1 (for ELC class of 2011-2013 ONLY)