Member Activism Makes the Clear Difference
Observations From My First Legislative Session as Your New Government Relations Director
By Charles Goodmacher

“This was a wonderful experience— I met new friends and really felt like I was part of a larger group of educators from all across the state making a difference,” said Jon Mullen reflecting on our legislative lobby day. “It was a pleasure to make the ‘rounds in the round.’ Everyone in charge did a fantastic job! Thanks for your hard work, and for the hard work of everybody else,” added a Santa Fe member, active for the first time with NEA-NM. Involved members do make the difference!

Our joint rally with the Federation of Teachers, Presidents’ Day draw hundreds. Join us next year! See more photos on page 4.

Eduardo Holguin, you most certainly deserve a great retirement having done an incredible job during your years as our Government Relations Director. We heard so from legislators, and our members know it too. My hat is off in honor to you. My hat is also off to Annadelle Sanchez, a former NEA-NM staff, who contributes enormously to our lobby team.

Eye opening is one way to describe the experience. We can’t share here some other phrases that come to mind. There were many inspired moments, and we found many challenges. As NEA-NM reflects on what happened on NEA-NM priority days, it inspires them too!

Legislators respond well to our public communications, they know our credibility with the public does influence voter perceptions.

When NEA-NM speaks, legislators listen closely. They know NEA-NM for our expertise on education issues and for applying high ethical standards in our advocacy. “I have experienced integrity with both Charles (Bowyer) and Sharon (Morgan),” said PED Secretary-Designate Skandera to our NEA-NM Board of Directors, January 24, 2013. Unfortunately, this level of respect alone does not alone translate into positive legislative outcomes and as noted, the Governor continues to veto a great deal of positive education legislation.

Member involvement really does make a huge difference. With members active in both the electoral and legislative processes, our power to influence and shape the direction of legislative and PED initiatives grows.

Teams from throughout New Mexico converged for updates, skills training, and mutual inspiration on our Legislative Lobby and Training day in January. We also joined our New Mexico Federation of Teachers colleagues for a second day of member lobbying in the Presidents’ Day rally (see photos on page 4). Our Las Vegas City Local brought the greatest number of members. Our “merged” Rio Rancho and Las Cruces CSEC Locals brought many, too.

Education Champions, Senate Majority Leader Sanchez and Senator Morales are among many legislators who noted the increased power that came from our two education unions working together. This was evident in the rally and throughout the session.

NEA-Carlsbad and other Locals sent teams to make an impact, too. NEA-Santa Fe President, Bernice Garcia Baca was present on many important issues including two bills helping counselors achieve pay equity with teachers. She also encouraged Santa Fe area legislators by presenting to them nearly 1,100 school employee petitions to local legislators (see photos on page 4).

Hundreds of members respond to our Legislative Updates and emailed Action Alerts. Legislators tells us they are influenced by member perspectives.

NEA-New Mexico extends a big “THANK YOU!” to the “Sweet Sixteen” House members who voted against HB2 at the time it shredded the budget recommendation of the House Education Committee in favor of PED proposed “reforms.”

Dear Colleagues,

Putting kids first....Promoting professional excellence....Improving the well-being of school employees.

These phrases captured my commitment as I began my term as president of NEA-New Mexico in July, 2007. That has not changed - my commitment has always been to our students and members, to continuing to support great public schools!

I made the choice to become active in my local early in my career. I started out writing the local newsletter back in the days when “cut and paste” involved scissors and glue and graph paper to make sure things lined up correctly! Within a few short years, I was local president at a time when relationships were strained with the school board, we did not yet have bargaining rights, and members were feeling powerless. We had to make a decision about taking strong action so members knew they did have a voice. On a Monday morning after a special Saturday night school board meeting, well over 100 school employees showed up on the picket line and were joined by parents and students. The members of NEA-Los Lunas stood strong together - we said we were not willing to accept the status quo and we made sure our voices were heard. Those weeks transformed me as an individual and certainly as a leader. Did we get everything we wanted? Of course not - life really isn’t that simple. Compromise while maintaining our core values is always part of moving forward, though not always the easiest to accept. And one victory is never the end. The struggle is on-going.

We continue to face new challenges and we are again in a cycle where the voice of school employees, those who know the most about the needs of our students, is not respected by the policymakers in power today. So we have choices to make. We can sit back and just say that there is nothing we can do. Or we can stand strong together and use our collective voices to bring about change.

At one level, that means electing a governor and legislators who will champion public education and educators. It means looking at the facts and challenging these policymakers when they are wrong. At a more local level, it means attending school board meetings and getting to know those who make the policy decisions for our schools. It means attending an association meeting to become more aware of what is happening locally, or volunteering to serve on a committee. Being informed is the first step. Next comes taking a risk and speaking up for what is right.

Change is never risk-free. I often recall the poster of the turtle with the message: “Behold the turtle who makes progress only when she sticks her neck out.” Sometimes the safety of that shell is very tempting. We always risk becoming turtle soup if we stick our neck out too far, for too long, alone. So what is the choice? Stay silent and let others control our professions and destroy public education? Or speak up for what we know is right? I don’t believe we really have any choice at all.

The most urgent issues today are teacher evaluation and salaries. We know what needs to be done. We must stand together and advocate for professional salaries and a living wage. We must get involved in our local associations as the details on teacher evaluation are decided. We must take control of our profession and make our voices heard! We must follow the example of my Los Lunas colleagues and show up and speak up!

Over the past six years, I have visited class rooms and met with employees across the state. I meet regularly with local presidents - a group of people that have my greatest respect and admiration! I know how much you care about our students and I know that you can and will take on this challenge! NEA-New Mexico has a long, proud history of leading the fight for public education and education employees in New Mexico. As I prepare for retirement, (and yes, I really am retiring July 15 and plan to spend quality time with my family), I have every confidence that we will continue to head in the right direction with strong new leadership, committed professionals in our schools and dedicated staff supporting our work. We are the NEA and together, we stand strong for our kids and our professions!

Thanks to each of you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president and for providing the inspiration to go forward with this work each day. I especially thank you for all you do to make a difference in the lives of our students. We touch lives and inspire students and each other every single day. What we do matters! Thank you for making a difference, and never give up! Let’s keep moving forward together!

In unity,

Sharon Morgan, NEA-NM President
smorgan@nea.org

Meet Betty Patterson: Our Newly Elected NEA-NM President

Thank you so much for your support in my election to the NEA-NM presidency. I will take the office on July 15th and look forward to working with you. I am confident that together, we will continue to grow our union. That will be my goal and I hope you will join me by asking your friends, neighbors, and co-workers who are not yet members to join us so that together, we can grow our power and influence.

I have taught special education students for over 30 years. I have taught students at all levels, primarily in the elementary school. Most recently I have worked in inclusion special education kindergarten and first grade classrooms. I have taught RTI groups and small reading groups, so I understand the challenges and opportunities we face in our classrooms every day, trying to balance the needs of students with all the paperwork and testing requirements. I have also been an active member of my local Association, serving as President, President-elect, AR, board member, and employee rights chair. I have served the NEA-NM as a board member and as your Vice President.

I also represent you on NMTEACH, bringing the voice of teachers to the discussions with the PED on teacher evaluations. We have spent hundreds of hours reading articles, writing and re-writing the observation protocol. We have spent many hours trying to come up with a fair rubric to ensure that the needs of all teachers and students are considered. We have been successful in some areas and less so in others. A common concern of the committee members is the time frame. It is clear that the PED will not consider extending the implementation timeline. The only way to make the needed changes in education policy is to change those who are in charge, and that will take all of us working together in the next election cycle.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me with concerns, celebrations or any other information you would like to share. I will certainly be visiting schools because I will miss the sound of little voices, and I look forward to seeing you there! B_Patterson55@yahoo.com

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NEA-NM: Great Public Schools Begin With Us!
• Putting Kids First • Promoting Professional Excellence • Improving the Well-Being of School Employees
Meet Mary K. Parr-Sanchez:
Our Newly Elected NEA-NM Vice President

Thank you to everyone who supported me in the election, and to those who didn’t support me, I hope I can gain your support. I am looking forward to working with all of you in the coming years. The challenges we face as educators are daunting, but together we can fight these battles. I look forward to fighting them with all of you. I consider you my NEA family, and I always look forward to seeing you at the state events and trainings.

I don’t know of anybody who became a teacher, because they wanted to look at scores and numbers and how to manipulate them. I know that we will never be able to quantify the “magic” that a good teacher brings to the classroom. Instead of a balanced approach to education, people rush to find and implement fixes that may work in the business world, but may not work with kids.

These are the problems. The answers come from a strong National and State organization to ensure that local organizations have the capacity to deal with problems within their school districts that affect kids. I look forward to travelling the state to get to know you better and to continue to develop a strong link between our NM local and State organization.

psanchez1992@msn.com

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2013 NEA-NM Election Results

NEA-NM STATEWIDE PRESIDENT
Betty Patterson, NEA-Las Cruces

NEA-NM STATEWIDE VICE PRESIDENT
Mary K. Parr-Sanchez, NEA-Las Cruces

NEA/NORTH CENTRAL REGION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Lucille Martinez-Holguin, Española-NEA

SW REGION DISTRICT 1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Rosalinda Carreon-Altamirano, NEA-Las Cruces

SW REGION DISTRICT 2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Diana L. Jackson, NEA-Alamogordo

SE REGION DISTRICT 1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Carol E. Parr, NEA-Carlsbad

SE REGION DISTRICT 2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Tony Mendoza, Roswell EA

SW REGION EDUCATION POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (EDPAC)
Lucas (Carlos) Arzabal, NEA-Las Cruces

NW EDPAC REGION
Danille D. Young, NEA-Farmington

RETIRED BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBER
Carol Tewelete, Alamogordo
Pat Jaquez, Las Cruces

NEA STATEWIDE RA DELEGATE
Elected
1 Sabina Aguilar, NEA-Las Cruces
2 Sarah Cook, NEA-Las Cruces
3 Pattie Burnam, NEA-Las Cruces
4 Diana L. Jackson, NEA-Alamogordo
5 Rosalinda Carreon-Altamirano, NEA-Las Cruces
6 Beverly Whygles, NEA-Las Cruces
7 Trish Ruiz, NEA-Hobbs
8 Pandora Van Auken, NEA-Alamogordo
9 Laurie Vazquez, NEA-Belen
10 Lucille Martinez-Holguin, Española NEA
11 Tammy Maxie, NEA-Lovington
12 Bobbie Stratton, NEA-Bernalillo

Alternates
13 Paula Aguirre, NEA-Hobbs
14 Paula Spencer, Roswell EA
15 Denise Dawson, Roswell EA
16 Danille D. Young, Farmington EA
17 Teresa Naggs, Roswell EA
18 Rebecca Fine Gale, NEA-Los Lunas
19 Randy Mondragon, NEA-Santa Fe
20 Martye Eison, NEA-Santa Fe
21 Grace Mayer, NEA-Santa Fe
22 Normajean Oleary, NEA-Las Cruces
23 Carol E. Parr, NEA-Carlsbad
24 Bea Acosta, NEA-Las Cruces
25 Rhonda Robinson, Roswell EA
26 Biviana Cadena, NEA-Las Cruces
27 Keith Rall, NEA-Hobbs
28 Daniel Loya, NEA-Las Cruces
29 Ben Serrano, NEA-Las Cruces
30 Elizabeth McDonald, NEA-Las Cruces

NEA RA CATEGORY-TWO DELEGATE
Elected
1 Gabe Jacquez, NEA-Las Cruces

Alternates
2 Mary Lou Cameron, NEA-Deming
3 Kathie Davis, NEA-Las Cruces

NEA RA CLUSTER DELEGATE
Elected
1 Brandy Blanchard, NEA-Loving
2 Rosalie Gonzales, NEA-Pojoaque
3 Cynthia Miranda, NEA-Gadsden
4 Dominique Esparza, NEA-Gadsden

RETIRED RA-DELEGATE
Elected
1 Carol Tewelete, Alamogordo
2 Pat Jaquez, Las Cruces

Alternates
3 Lydia Lawson, Hobbs
4 Eduardo Holguin, Las Cruces
5 Otto Eachus, Roswell
6 Dorothy Eachus, Roswell
7 Eloy Gonzales, Silver City
NEA-New Mexico EdPAC Decline to Contribute Form

The NEA-New Mexico believes in the power of collective action. Toward this end, we seek to allow as many members as possible to make reasonably small financial contributions to our efforts to influence New Mexico politics in a positive direction for our members and the students they serve. NEA-NM EdPAC collects voluntary contributions from members (in the same manner as dues are collected). Members who do wish to participate in this 25 cents per pay period (12.5 cents for Education Support Professionals) effort may request that this money be returned to them and, thus, decline financial support of our political action program. Anyone who wishes to decline this support may download a form to return to NEA-NM EdPAC from this link: www.nea-nm.org/2002legislature/EdPAC.htm
Be Careful Crossing the Concrete

By Charles Bowyer

When I was a child, our neighborhood grocery store was about a ten minute walk from my house. From the time I was first allowed to walk that short distance all by myself to my last teenage bicycle trip with a basket full of groceries, I heard this admonition from our storekeeper, “Be careful crossing the Concrete.” In my little neighborhood in a small town in the hills of eastern Kentucky, all of the streets were paved with asphalt except one: the Concrete Street. I don’t actually remember its real name— it was just the Concrete Street. The Concrete lay between the store and my house. This street was the longest straightest street in the neighborhood and lent itself to more careless and speedier traffic than other streets.

Thus, the warning—crossing the Concrete was a discontinuity. It disrupted the regular flow of walking (or bike riding) in the neighborhood. Maybe not as profound a discontinuity as that described by Michel Foucault, the French philosopher, historian, critic and sociologist, who believed that, discontinuity and continuity reflect the flow of history and the fact that some “things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way” from one era to the next.

School year 2013-2014 will be just such a discontinuity. We will have a new teacher evaluation system. The issues around that are described on page 8 in this Advocate’s Voice. We will start the process of electing a governor in the spring of 2014. We will live with the decisions of the 2013 Legislature, also described on page 1 & 4 of this edition. Our members will pay more for their retirement, but with assurance that it’s solvency is ensured. Our members will pay more for health insurance premiums, but with the assurance that their benefit package will not be changed. Our members will get a small increase in salary, but use it on increased retirement and insurance costs! These facts seem like an awful lot of “glass half full” or “glass half empty” thinking.

We offer our members and potential members the opportunities to make the discontinuity even more profound. Give them the chance to make sure that “things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way.” We do that by recruiting members into an organization determined to do what the pioneers who created NEA-New Mexico 126 years ago were determined to do: change the world of education in New Mexico. They did exactly that by moving from a privatized parochial system for the few to a public system open to all children. Now we are fighting forces that want to go back to the bad old days of privatization, with virtual charter schools run by out of state for profit companies. Our founders called for the creation of the Association by stating “advancement of educational interests in any state or community can best be accomplished through regular organized efforts.”

We offer each other and potential members the opportunity to be part of a revitalized “organized effort.” It is not enough to talk about protecting jobs or saving money on member benefits; we offer the opportunity to build something new, just as our founders did 126 years ago. We must move ourselves back into a culture of organizing that inspired our founders to push legislators, governors, and the public into literally creating public schools for New Mexico and provides opportunity to see things no longer “known in the same way.”

So before this school year ends (and especially as collective bargaining proceeds) let a potential member know that we don’t have all the answers, but that together we are more likely to come up with better answers!

Of course, we have to be careful crossing the discontinuity. The dictionary provides us with two different ways to look at being careful. One implies danger; careful means being attentive to potential danger, error, or harm. Mark Twain once said, “A lesson hard won – such as holding the cat by its tail – need only be learned once, but it is surely learned well.” Until we organize and create solutions for ourselves we’ve still got that cat by the tail!

Exercising care can also mean being thorough and painstaking in action or execution; being conscientious. That’s the view we take as we move ourselves in the direction or organizing our state, our locals, and our worksites.

As you close out this school year, get ready to drop that cat and make a difference; just be careful crossing the discontinuity!

cbowyer@nea.org

Such a Friend

By Charles Bowyer

When I was privileged to serve as NEA-New Mexico President in the early 1990s, I worked with a wonderful executive director and we created a real partnership for the work. That partnership pales in comparison to the work Morgan and I have maintained for the two terms of her presidency. Most folks know Sharon and I have been friends and colleagues for many years going back to our local leadership days in Valencia County. Sharon was a leader in NEA-Belen and a supportive parent in the Los Lunas Schools in the eighties when NEA-Los Lunas was once again asserting itself as the advocate for employees in the school district.

When Sharon started work in Los Lunas as a kindergarten teacher, she moved into leadership in NEA-Los Lunas. The two of us have been partners in advocacy for nearly 30 years. The opportunity to work as the executive director during her presidency has been a dream job and, certainly the high point of my tenure as a professional association advocate. Sharon continues her leadership in advocacy as she continues her work to make the new teacher evaluation system as fair as possible under the current political environment. She dedicated her presidency to increasing capacity at the local level and revitalized our Local Presidents’ Academy and our Emerging Leaders Cadre. Both of these programs continue as vibrant parts of our state program because of Sharon’s passion.

The last six years have been a joy for me. Yeats said it best, “Think where man’s glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends.” Or in this case, such a friend as Sharon Morgan!
NEA-New Mexico celebrated the 109th birthday of Dr. Seuss (aka Theodor Geisel) with its annual observance of NEA’s Read Across America the weeks of February 25 and March 4, 2013. Schools across the state had book character costume parades, cooked up green eggs and ham, invited celebrity readers and were visited by the likes of The Cat in the Hat and Thing 1 and Thing 2.

The kick off started on Thursday, February 28 with the “NEA’s Cat-a-Van Reading Tour” making two of its nationwide stops at Desert View Elementary School and Ann Parish Elementary School in Los Lunas. The tour was made possible through a unique partnership between the National Education Association and Delta Dental. The two have teamed up to deliver a very important message to students:

2 x 2 + 20 = good oral health and literacy habits (brush twice a day + read 20 minutes daily).

All the students at both schools were surprised by Thing 1 and Thing 2 and Marshall Molar. Students received a Cat hat and a goodie-bag containing a book, bookmarks, toothbrush, dental floss, and 2-minute timer. The school libraries also received a $1000 check to make available a better collection of books for the students.

On Friday, March 1, NEA-New Mexico and its resident seven foot feline celebrated Dr. Seuss’ birthday in Belen at Dennis Chavez Elementary School, marking the first leg of the Cat in the Hat’s journey around New Mexico. He was joined by NEA-NM’s 2013 Read Across America Co-Chairperson, Becky Rivera. Ms. Rivera is the recipient of the 2013 NEA-NM Teaching Excellence Award. Becky brought some of her high school students to be celebrity readers in each of the classrooms. They read excerpts from books appropriate to the students’ ages. Seuss events were held all day including reading, costumes, door decorating, and games. Books for the used book exchange were donated by Presbyterian Hospital of Albuquerque. The assembly concluded, as any good birthday celebration does, with a rousing rendition of “Happy Birthday” to Dr. Seuss and Cat in the Hat. Birthday cupcakes were given out to all the elementary schoolers at lunchtime.

The following week, March 4-6, the Cat and Things were spotted in Alamogordo for two days and four school visits to Sacramento Elementary School, Mountain View Middle School, Yucca Elementary School and Oregon Elementary school. The Cat was joined by NEA-NM’s other 2013 Read Across America Co-Chairperson, Sarah Johnston. Sarah’s Honors class from Mountain View Middle School joined the tour of the four schools. They performed their own written work at the assemblies, spoke about why reading was important to them and went around the schools reading in each classroom. There were assemblies, books and reading at each site. The kids and the Cat had a great time. Fun was had by all.

Thanks to all those who planned and helped out. It couldn’t have been done without you.
The Facts About Teacher Evaluation

As you most likely know, the new rule on teacher evaluation will be implemented statewide in 2013-14. What’s included in the new teacher evaluation rule?

- 25% based on teacher observation
- 35% based on student achievement growth using 3 years worth of data in tested grades and subjects (see links from nea-nm.org under teacher evaluation)
- 15% based on multiple measures of student achievement growth
- 25% based on multiple measures of teacher effectiveness

The new rule bases 25% of the teacher’s evaluation on teacher observations. The PED created a rubric with 4 domains that describe a teacher’s work. These are: Planning and Preparation, Creating an Environment for Learning, Teaching for Learning, and Professionalism. Then each of the domains has elements that describe what is expected under each domain. These elements will then be rated on a 5 point scale to include ineffective, minimally effective, effective, highly effective, and exemplary.

A lot of the details are still not available, so we are keeping the most current info on our website, do check it periodically! We know that our members in pilot districts and on NM TEACH worked to make this process more fair and transparent over the past several months. Our collective voices do make a difference!

NEA-New Mexico members know that student learning thrives in environments where educators collaborate, share their knowledge and experience, get advice and feedback from each other about what’s working and what’s not working. We continue to support locals in their efforts to create those environments in every school.

We know teachers want to be able to identify student growth and determine if our practice supports student learning. We want evaluations that really help us continue to improve our practice, and we want colleagues who are struggling to be identified and either supported through professional development or removed. We continue to support locals as they work with school districts to create a fair, transparent evaluation process that does so.

We continue to advocate for what is right for teachers and students. It takes all of us working together, so be sure to stay informed and stay involved!

ARE YOU A TEACHER QUALITY ADVOCATE?

As we move ahead with the work on teacher evaluation, NEA-NM is establishing a cadre of Teacher Quality Advocates (TQAs). Perhaps, you the reader, may wish to participate in this wonderful professional opportunity. Ten (10) TQA positions around our state will be named to receive a $1,000 stipend. The stipend covers work to be completed during the 2013-14 school year. As leaders raising the teachers’ collective voice on professional needs and priorities, TQAs will also lead in organizing and membership participation and recruitment tied to professional issues.

As liaison for their Local and Locals statewide, TQAs’ assess and report out the professional needs and priorities of teachers in their respective districts. TQAs are a resource, helping to create effective collective bargaining language around professional issues and to identify and implement strategies at the school site and district level to provide the best possible professional support for our members.

“NEA-NM is the voice of teaching professionals in our state,” notes NEA-NM President, Sharon Morgan. “Our cadre of Teacher Quality Advocates will be a great resource for our Association as we continue to meet the professional needs of our members,” adds Morgan.

Applications will be available May 1. For more information, contact Leslie Fritz at lfritz@nea.org.

New Evaluation System Brings New Opportunities

By Leslie Fritz

How the new teacher evaluation system will impact teachers’ due process rights is one of the unanswered questions about the system. NEA-NM has successfully advocated for expanded due process rights in the new system. Two victories for employee rights include:

1. Employees now have the following year after identification of “minimally effective” or “ineffective” teaching ratings on a summative evaluation to improve their rating.
2. Employees cannot be discharged for uncorrected, unsatisfactory work performance without having a minimum of ninety days pursuant to an improvement plan with targeted professional development provided by the employer.

Other questions focus on the exact student achievement growth measures that will be used and how factors such as teacher attendance and teacher-generated assessments will be considered. Many are wondering if the new evaluation system meets legal requirements set forth in New Mexico state law. NEA-NM is taking the lead to provide answers to these and other questions.

As a member of NEA-NM, you are a steward of our profession… OUR PROFESSION. The new evaluation system opens the door for NEA-NM members around the state to step up and take ownership of their profession by participating in the selection of locally-mandated measures for student achievement growth and teacher practices that will count for a third of the evaluation criteria. In our collective bargaining locals, NEA-NM local affiliates will bargain language on the actual implementation of the new evaluation process. Non-bargaining locals will strategize with their local Districts and School Boards to establish mutually-acceptable options.

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

Local & Members In Action 

Locals & Members In Action on Evaluations

NEA-NM President Morgan sent a letter to all Locals urging quick action for maximum impact on their District plans to implement the new Evaluation regulations by the PED. The letter including templates for Locals to use in asserting their rightful role in this process through negotiations where we bargain, and through input where we don’t. Our Locals are actively using a diversity of means for educators to have their say in how their District implements the new PED regulations.

These include:

“Will It Be Easier For the District to Fire You?” will be the main question discussed by many Locals at informational meetings to be organized this Spring.

NEA-Santa Fe submitted a negotiation proposal calling for all decisions made at the District level to be made by a joint team with equal representation from administration and NEA-Santa Fe. Early indications are that the Locals’ legal right to negotiate “impacts of…” will be respected by the District.

Although NEA-Aztec is developing proposals, the district so far seems to prefer working on their own.

NEA-Los Lunas is collaboratively engaged with the District through a task force, working together to complete the various components of the evaluation plan. The task force solicited teacher input and all agree the evaluation system needs to be as simple as possible. Next steps will be to modify our district’s evaluation plan and then to tweak our CBA language regarding evaluations. We anticipate this will be an ongoing and extensive process.

What is your Local doing? What can you do to help your Local address these issues?
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Before  After
ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY?

As spring begins in New Mexico we plan for summer break and doing some much needed spring cleaning. A part of that planning process should also include preparing for financial emergencies. The first rule in being prepared for a financial emergency is not to use your emergency resources except for emergencies.

Ignoring this first rule catches many people flat-footed in the financial crisis. They already maxed out their credit cards, drawn down their home equity line of credit, and borrowed against their retirement plan. They are left with no reserves when they lost their job or otherwise saw their income drop.

If you’ve already drawn on your reserves but so far have avoided any immediate emergency, the first order of business is to restore these safety nets—if you can—so they are there when you need them.

There are a number of personal financial emergencies that can strike anyone at any time. Losing your job is one of the most obvious, as has been made painfully clear in the recession, especially for public sector employees as local authorities are rocked by budget cuts.

Here are some of the things you can do to prepare for financial emergencies:

- **Keep an emergency fund sufficient to cover anywhere from three to nine months of expenses.** This should be a savings account or other readily accessible asset you normally don’t touch. One recommendation offering flexibility is to keep six months’ expenses in the fund so you can use up to three months of it for unexpected expenses that fall short of a genuine emergency.

- **Various types of insurance are designed to help protect against financial emergencies.** Health insurance, obviously, is obligatory given the high cost of care. Life insurance can support a family in the event of a breadwinner’s untimely death. If you have a big mortgage, mortgage life insurance pays it off in the event of your death. NEA-New Mexico endorsed provider California Casualty Homeowner’s insurance can guard against loss from fire or theft. Collision insurance, optional even when liability insurance is required, protects against the loss of much-needed transportation or costly repairs. Disability insurance guards against loss of income due to injury or illness. Do you need all these? The short answer is yes, especially if you have dependents who rely on your income. As expected life spans increase, long-term care insurance is becoming desirable to protect your spouse or children against the high costs of providing home or institutional care for you.

- **There are savings products designed for those major expenses that are not unexpected**—such as tax-advantaged retirement funds or college savings plans. Most of these allow for either borrowing against or cashing out in the event of major emergencies. A Roth IRA is particularly flexible in this regard.

  - A generally strong financial position also leaves you much better prepared for an emergency. Keeping credit card balances low saves money and gives you some ready financing for an unexpected crisis. In general, growing the equity in your home as quickly as possible creates another buffer in an emergency to secure a Home Equity Line of Credit.

  - Open a checking account at a credit union or community bank, where you are likelier to be seen as a person rather than just as a credit rating and can get approval for a personal line of credit that you can tap in an emergency.

Visit NEA Member Benefits at www.neamb.com to find out how you can use our specially designed products & services to prepare for any unexpected emergencies. Members Benefits can help provide simple solutions for you and your family. Remember you can’t save if you don’t use the benefits.

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**Member Mentions**

Randy Mondragon from NEA-Santa Fe is the ESP (Education Support Professional) of the Year for 2013-14 and he will be our candidate for the national ESP of the Year Award.

NEA-NM Award for Teaching Excellence for 2013-14: Charles Gerheart of Cobre NEA. He will also be our nominee for the NEA Foundation California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence.

This year’s awardee, Becky Rivera of NEA-Belen, will be spending 10 days (?) in Brazil as our state awardee for 2012-13.

Pandy Van Auen, NEA-Alamogordo president-elect, graduated from the NEA Leaders for Tomorrow Program at the national ESP Conference in Louisville, KY March 8-10.

Laurie Vazquez, NEA-Belen and member of the NEA-NM Board of Directors, is the NEA-NM representative on the NEA Common Core Work Group and will be meeting in Denver in April to continue this work. I had the link to the NEA toolkit in the last Express, I think.

ELC graduation is April 27.

Congratulations to the Essential Leadership Cadre Class of 2013 Graduates:

- Carrie Boatwright, NEA-Carlsbad
- Michael Chavez, NEA-Bernalillo
- David Chester, NEA-Las Vegas City
- Susan Comer, Las Cruces CSEC
- Denise Dawson, Roswell EA
- Brenda Dillon, Roswell EA
- Geraldine Franco, NEA-Carlsbad
- Jamie Gonzalez, NEA-Gadsden
- Bethany Jarrell, NEA-Alamogordo
- Melinda Lyons, NEA-Alamogordo
- Melinda Miera, Española-NEA
- Cynthia Miranda, NEA-Gadsden
- Carol Parr, NEA-Carlsbad
- Trish Ruiz, NEA-Hobs
- Jennifer Trujillo, NEA-Bernalillo

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**Stand Proud, Speak Loud**

Stand Proud, Speak Loud: Organize for Power! NEA-New Mexico Education Support Professionals (ESP) from across the state came together in Las Cruces March 23 to learn more about organizing to build the power and influence of their local associations. Keynote speaker Judy Near, 2012 NEA ESP of the Year, reminded participants that they are not “just a [custodian or secretary...]” – they are professionals who take pride in their work and make a difference in the lives of our students and our members! Presenters included state staff and leaders as well as local ESP leaders. NEA-NM ESP Committee Chair, Karen Bonanno kept the agenda moving as she reminded participants about the importance of “standing proud and speaking loud!”

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**Staff Mentions**

Paul Sanchez brings a wealth of direct experience to his new position as UniServ Director/Coordinator of Membership and Capacity Building. Paul began his career as UniServ Director for NEA-New Mexico, and moved on to the Michigan Education Association as a Professional Issues Specialist and UniServ. He served as Executive Director of the Seminole County Florida Education Association, and just completed a two year stint on staff with the Federal Education Association, based in Accra, Ghana.

Jonathon Leibowitz has filled in on a temporary basis while our veteran NEA-NM UniServ Director Patrick Chavez remains on long-term medical leave. Best wishes Pat!

Charles Goodmacher now serves as our Advocates’ Voice Editor, along with duties as NEA-NM’s Government Relations and Research Director and UniServ Director for NEA-Santa Fe.
Mortgage rates are still low – Act now!

Call 1-800-215-0607 or visit neamb.com/hfp today!

Thousands of your fellow members have already taken advantage of the low mortgage rates provided through the NEA Home Financing Program® to refinance an existing home or purchase a new one. The NEA Home Financing Program, provided by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, is not just another mortgage program – it comes with the full support and advocacy of your association.

Don’t miss out on the low mortgage rates! Contact a home mortgage consultant at 1-800-215-0607 or visit neamb.com/hfp to lock-in your rate today.

Enjoy these benefits for NEA members:

• Competitive rates and fees
• Choice of loan options
• Everything up until closing can be handled through a toll-free number
• A 60-day interest rate lock option to protect against rising rates
• NEA Member Bonus - Get a $200 gift card when you close on your loan

Remember, the NEA Home Financing Program is also available to families of NEA members.

1. To be eligible for this promotion, you must close on a new purchase or refinance loan secured by a first mortgage or deed of trust through a Wells Fargo Home Mortgage eligible program, subject to availability. This promotion cannot be combined with the benefits of The Relocation Mortgage Program®, Wells Fargo Three-Step Refinance System® or any other program or promotion. Not available on assumption or modification loans, loans originated through brokers, joint ventures or other third parties, home equity loans or home equity lines of credit. This promotion is subject to change, or may be withdrawn at any time without notice and is administered by a third-party vendor, not affiliated with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. This promotion consists of a stored-value gift card that may be redeemed at participating merchants. Obtain the list of participating merchants by calling 1-800-875-0190 or by going to http://www.performanceplusaward.com/. Once redeemed, the gift card promotion may be reported to the IRS on a Form 1099-MISC. Please consult your tax advisor regarding your individual tax implications. Contact your home mortgage consultant for additional details, including current availability, terms and conditions. NEA family members include spouse (domestic partner), adult children and parents. Information is accurate as of date of printing and subject to change without notice. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is a division of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. ©2011 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

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2 Sharon Morgan’s Farwell Column

3 2013 NEA-NM Election Results

5 Be Careful Crossing the Concrete by Charles Bowyer

6-7 The Cat Hits the Road

8 A Look at the New Teacher Evaluation System

10 Are You Prepared for a Financial Emergency by Antonio Galindo NEA Member Benefits

Spring 2013 www.nea-nm.org

Help Us Save Trees!
If you prefer to read the Advocate’s Voice online at www.nea-nm.org, send an email to lmyers@nea.org.

2013-2014 NEA-NM Event Calendar

Save the Date & visit nea-nm.org for Details and Registration

Aug. 3, 2013 • All Committee Day, Santa Fe

Sept. 14, 2013 • Fall Regional Conference
(Organizing for Employee Rights), TBD

Oct. 25, 2013 • Hall of Fame, ABQ

Oct. 26, 2013 • Annual Delegate Council, ABQ

Dec. 7, 2013 • Winter Presidents’ Council & Advocacy Conference, TBD

Jan. 22, 2014 • Legislative Conference & Reception, Santa Fe

Mar. 15, 2014 • Spring Presidents’ Council, TBD

Mar. 29, 2014 • Spring Regional Conference
(Organizing for Bargaining), TBD

June 10, 2014 • Presidents’ Academy & Treasurer’s Training, TBD

June 11-12, 2014 • SLA & ELC, TBD

July 1-6, 2014 • NEA RA, Denver, CO