Surviving the Life…

…amid Mayans, POTUS and Legislators

“All my bags are packed; I’m ready to go
I’m standin’ here outside your door…”
– John Denver

Initial reaction was disbelief and dismissal of the cartoonish, long-haired, bearded man in sackcloth with his sign proclaiming “The End is Near.” How many times before had we been told life as we know it was about to cease? As the day grew closer, even a healthy skepticism gave way to alternatives in dealing with the possibility. Should it be a Doris Day “Que Sera’s-Whatever Will Be” approach, complete repentance, or maybe one last great act of defiance—maxing out the credit cards before the last day. As with some answers on standardized tests, I chose none of the above. I continued doing what I was doing day in and day out because I still believed like Annie “that the sun will come up tomorrow…” and it did. There I was basking in the glorious sunlight of November 7th—the morning after Election Day. What? You were thinking I was talking about the pending end on December 21, 2012? Naw! The Mayans had it all wrong because in their calendar they did not account for the computer patches installed in 2000 for the millennial change. My angst was over the national and state elections and the pallor they would have cast if WE had not stepped up and made the difference. We were present and we won significant victories up and down the ballot.

Legislative Landscape

The count in the legislature remained unsettled for a month, as two House races were within the automatic recount and some sore-loser squabbling erupted over a Senate race. The Senate will have a 25-17 Democratic margin and barring any attempts on the victors to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory on the session’s first day, we will have our recommended candidates firmly in control of that body. The House has some breathing room with a 38-32 margin compared to the razor thin 35-34-1 (Independent) we suffered for two years. Again, our recommended candidates will be in firm control of this body which gives us momentum to play some offense for public schools and public school employees, instead of just hunkering down and weathering the onslaught from the 4th Floor (or is it really the 5th Floor?).

283 Million Reasons

It’s been 4 years since most public school employees saw their last salary increase. Over that time each has been asked to do more with less: less time, less to spend on materials, less money to hire the needed number of colleagues to serve our students, and less respect and appreciation for the added responsibilities and duties all have had placed on their plates. There are $283 Million available to this legislature in new money. All the candidates spoke about education as their top priority; it is now up to them to “put up” as legislators. Other interests will be tugging and pulling for their share so it will remain on our shoulders to make it clear: FOUR YEARS is Enough!–It is Time for Salary Increases.

It is also time to reverse the increases on our class size/class loads maximums in statute that have been allowed over the last four years because of budget shortfalls. The time of stack them deep and teach them cheap is over if we truly want to meet every student’s academic needs. One way to do this is by ensuring that the money the state has to invest in our public schools all flows through our equalization formula. This means that when our legislators are deliberating on the school budget, we must insist that they place the dollars “above the line,” where it will indeed be divvied up to each school district according to the formula for local boards to use for their community’s specific needs. Putting money “below the line” means that it will sit at the discretion of the PED for them to dole out to certain districts and only for certain programs.

The Stakeholder Plan

Another issue that needs to be resolved during this sixty-day legislative session is approval of the unanimous Education Retirement Plan agreed upon by all stakeholders, passed by the ERB, and unanimously approved by the interim legislative group, the Investment and Pension Oversight Committee (IPOC). Since March 2012, ERB began bringing together all the entities which have stakeholders in the educational retirement system: NEA, AFSCME, AFT, CWA, retiree groups, colleges, universities, administrators, and school boards were represented in trying to find a unanimous platform from which we could move forward to put the retirement fund on stronger financial footing over a period of years. The last few years, the ERB went at it alone without seeking stakeholder input before cobbling a plan and saw their efforts go up in flames because stakeholders fought their proposals; cutting or eliminating the retiree COLA, mandating a minimum retirement age of 55 or 60 or 62 for everyone currently working, and/or raising employee contributions to 11.3%. Legislators urged all of us to sit down together and present them with a plan all of us could agree to support and that is where we are now. Not only did IPOC give its unanimous approval to turn this proposal into legislation, they took it one step further—something that we highly support- they added keeping those public school employees making $20,000 or less at a 7.9% employee contribution. The stakeholder plan follows the input that NEA-NM members gave: NO change to current and future employees (NOT the current employees; it does raise the benefits for current retirees; it does NOT NEA-NM members gave: NO change to current and future employees (NOT the current employees; it does raise the benefits for current retirees; it does NOT

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“Surviving the Life…” Continued on page 11
Our Future...Our Choice

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.”

Everyone knows that Dr. Seuss has a way with words, a way that connects to both children and adults. These words certainly apply to all of us in this time of change and challenges. As educators, this is certainly one of the messages we share with students. We encourage them to listen and learn, and then to make intelligent, reasoned decisions. We encourage them to use their brains and then do what is right.

We find ourselves in a similar situation with the challenges and changes facing the profession. And when it comes to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), we really do need to steer implementation in the right direction. While sometimes it feels like just another thing added to our plates, CCSS actually has the opportunity to professionalize teaching and put teachers back in charge of their classrooms! The CCSS website states that, “The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. That’s why these standards will establish what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.” Teaching really is more than rocket science and the new standards work recognizes this. Teachers are free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the standards. The CCSS, implemented correctly, identifies what students should learn and allows teachers to teach and districts to provide the support and materials teachers and students need. It does not mean that everyone is on the same page at the same time— that is just the opposite of what the standards are all about.

It is up to us to make sure that the standards are implemented correctly. We will need to work within our schools and districts to make sure we have appropriate materials that challenge students to think more deeply about fewer concepts, to transfer knowledge to other situations. NEA-New Mexico leaders are partnering with other education organizations to work at the state and district level to make sure that the standards will work for our students and for educators!

It’s also our responsibility to let go of some things we are comfortable with and have always taught, not just add the CCSS to an already full day! That may be challenging, but in the end, as we rediscover the creativity and excitement of teaching, it will be worth it!

There are many resources available to help teachers, parents and students as we move to full implementation. Teaching Channel is one such resource with a video showcase of inspiring and effective teaching practices in our schools. The video library offers a wide range of subjects, topics and grade levels K-12. The videos also include information on alignment with the Common Core State Standards. The goals of the Teaching Channel are listed as: building professional learning resources that teachers want; deepening and improving opportunities for teacher learning; and elevating and celebrating teaching in our society. The videos show real teachers teaching real students and talking about their thinking. Be sure to check it out for some great ideas, or submit your own and maybe become a featured teacher! It’s a free resource and sign-up is quick and easy.

Another resource is the Digital Learning Day website: www.digitallearningday.org, with a focus on engaging students, celebrating educators and creating better schools. Digital Learning Day is February 6, 2013. You will find toolkits to provide digital learning resources and ideas for teachers in specific subject areas.

NEA will also be providing some great and useful resources to support implementation of the CCSS. We’ll include a link on our website as soon as it is ready to go! Teaching does touch the future and educators make a difference in the lives of students every day! In recognition of the important impact all educators have on our students, we are excited to have two outstanding teachers serving as the honorary co-chairs of this year’s NEA-NM Read Across America! Becky Rivera and Sarah Johnston are recent recipients of the NEA-NM Teaching Excellence Award. Their commitment to their students, to literacy, and to creating an exciting learning environment are the reasons they were selected by their colleagues for this honor. Teaching is more than rocket science! And Reading is Out of This World!

In unity,

Sharon Morgan, NEA-NM President

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Ten Minutes With... Estrella Telles

Position: Middle School Teacher
Local Association: NEA-Las Cruces
Years worked in Education: Five

What is a typical school/work day like for you?
Greeting students as they enter my room into a safe and welcoming environment is the highlight of my day. Sometimes morning meetings can be frustrating, but my students always know how to boost me up.

What do you like about your job?
What I like about my job is being able to spend the day with my students. I am blessed to be able to help build a base for their knowledge, caring, support, and guidance. I am privileged that I am entrusted to help mold our future through their success. I love to grow in respect with my students throughout the year.

What is hard about your job?
I find it difficult to efficiently handle paperwork (such as evaluating and analyzing standardized test scores). It would be wonderful to allotted the time above and beyond my actual instruction and planning time to efficiently analyze and evaluate the data which I am expected to know proficiently. It is also hard to feel alone (even though I am not) when I want to speak up for something I believe in as a professional.

What are the most fun and unusual things that have happened on the job?
Those enjoyable moments come when I am listening to my kids talk—tell jokes and watching them learn to accept their peers. Building relationships is the most fun I have had in the five years I’ve been teaching. I had the chance to spend a small amount of time teaching my students to dance. We’ve learned line dances like the “Cupid Shuffle and the official NEA dance, the “Electric Slide”. We’ve also learned country two-stepping, which I really enjoy!

Fun and interesting things also happen during lunch! It’s always fun to eat when you’re a teacher. My students understand the importance of making sure Ms. Telles is fed.

How has being an Association member been helpful to you?
Any meeting in which I have to meet with administration I benefit from having the support and security of having an NEA member with me. I was able to attend the NEA Representative Assembly last July in Washington, DC. That experience of being with 10,000 of my NEA colleagues opened my mind to ideas of what I can do to help my students and be an advocate for them as well as for me and my colleagues.
An Inside Job

NEA-NM finds Experts within its Ranks

Since the inception of NEA’s Read Across America in the late 1990s, NEA-NM has sought out prominent New Mexicans from all aspects of our diverse population to serve as honorary chairpersons of our very popular literacy program; artists, musicians, authors, and TV personalities have agreed to serve. This year, NEA-NM has looked within its own talented membership and found two very deserving and worthy members to serve as 2013 NEA-NM Read Across America Chairs. Both are accomplished teachers and both have been honored as NEA-NM’s recipients of the Award for Teaching Excellence.

Rebecca Rivera
Belen High School

Becky touches not only the present but the future as well in a very literal sense every single school day. She is in charge of the state’s longest running Grads program— an in-school, for credit, dropout prevention program for teen moms. She also runs the state licensed Child Development Center, so not only do the moms come to school— so do their babies! She teaches her students the academic lessons along with so many intangibles of being a successful student, a responsive parent, and a good role model which will be lessons carried across generations by her actual students of record and those simply “auditing” her classes while they wait for Mom.

Sarah Johnston
Mountain View Middle School, Alamogordo

As the new kid on the block for the English Department in 2006, Sarah quickly made an impression on her more seasoned, veteran colleagues by exuding her professionalism and passion. She began sharing her strategies for teaching writing and readily made herself available to lead professional development opportunities for her colleagues in all academic areas. The proof of the pudding came in the spring as students in the entire school were doing their pre-writing exercises for the SBA in the “Johnston” method; leading to more confident writers and much better work product on their exams. Her excitement and “Can-Do” attitude has infected students and staff alike. Her students publish their own books and produce a monthly literary magazine showcasing student work.

Two fine examples of what Linus once said (paraphrase) in a “PEANUTS” comic strip: “The NEA certainly puts out a fine product.” *

*Your 2013 NEA-NM Read Across Poster is in THIS Issue!*

For more information on NEA’s Read Across America, downloadable materials, ideas on how to celebrate it, and to reserve a visit from the Cat in The Hat at your school, please go to: nea-nm.org

Comings and Goings

Many changes are afoot at NEA-NM this upcoming year. As you see on page 8, you are electing your new executive officers who will assume their duties on July 15, 2013. On a shorter time line we have these reports:

Welcome – Ewa Krakowska who started off the New Year as the new NEA-NM Uniserv Director in the Farmington office. Ewa was born and educated in Poland and actually cut her advocacy teeth during her college years in the students’ union associated with Solidarity and Lech Walesa. She came to the Four Corners as an archaeologist and for the last 13 years has been a history teacher at Shiprock HS on the Navajo Reservation. She joined NEA her first day on the job, served as her local’s president for 7 years and was instrumental in making Central Consolidated EA the very first bargaining local in NW New Mexico and since then, one of the largest wall-to-wall locals in NEA-NM.

Farewell – Tony Massar, our visitor from the East, leaves his position in Farmington and heads back to the familiar confines of upper New York State where he crafted a career of NEA work in a variety of locals and capacities including his expertise in arbitration and bargaining. We wish him well.

Vaya con Dios – David Sperling bids us “Hasta la Vista” as he retires from his NEA-NM Business Manager position and heads to the rarefied mountaintop air in the ecological splendor of Ecuador. David has assisted in putting and keeping NEA-NM on sound financial footing. We don’t say goodbye to David and his familia, but rather “Hasta Luego” – until next time… if he ever comes off those mountains this way. Stepping into the Director of Finance position is our current account receivable guru, Linda Moody.

“We come to the end of our broadcast day…”

TV Screen: American Flag waving majestically on flag pole

Voice Over: We come to the end of our broadcast day. National Anthem begins to play…

The time has come for me to say good-bye to the first 38 years of my NEA life-33 as an Association activist/Leader and the last 5+ as a staff person. It has been my duty as a school employee to be a member of the NEA; it has been my honor to have served YOU, my colleagues as an NEA-NM Officer; and my pleasure to have worked with you and for you as a member of your staff.

Eduardo Holguin, Editor

Voice Over: National Anthem ends
TV Screen: Fade to Test Pattern…
School Employee Retirement Benefits Are Promises Made.
They Must Also Be Promises Kept!

By Charles Bowyer

The New Mexico Educational Retirement Board has a solvency proposal that meets our concerns and is much improved over last year. A stakeholder group of all major organizations with members in the retirement system have unanimously endorsed the proposal. An interim committee of the Legislature, the Investment and Pension Oversight Committee, has unanimously endorsed the proposal. Under the proposal, all current and future ERB members’ contribution rate will rise to 10.7% over a two year period. New members (not current members) will have a minimum retirement age of 55 and will be eligible for a Cost of Living Adjustment at age 67. This proposal does not call for higher employer contribution than what was agreed to in 2005, but does require the Legislature to live up to the increases in current law and to stop postponing those increases.

If the ERB only changed the benefits for new members, it would take much longer to improve ERB’s sustainability. There is no one easy answer to the problem. However, the adopted proposal, if implemented, will increase ERB’s funding to 95% within 30 years.

Other states have implemented more severe changes. For example, New Jersey’s retirees have lost their COLA entirely until their fund has a funding ratio of 80%, most likely many years in the future. Retirees in Colorado and Minnesota have seen their COLA reduced, and these reductions have withstood court challenges. Even with these changes, the retirement benefits that are earned by NM educators will continue to be competitive regionally and nationally. Draastic changes are not required to ensure long-term solvency. The COLA does not have to be eliminated. Retirees’ benefits do not have to be slashed. Neither current nor future members’ benefits have to be drastically reduced.

We believe that our earned retirement benefits are a protected contract and a vested property right under the New Mexico Constitution. We firmly believe that Article 2, Section 19 and Article 20, Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution make any diminution of benefits to currently vested members of ERA under current economic conditions unconstitutional.

To summarize your arguments against retirement plan changes for currently vested or retired members of the Educational Retirement Association,

1. If you are vested, you already earned your benefit under the conditions in existence when you vested.
2. No one contributed a gift on your behalf. You paid for your retirement plan as deferred compensation that already belongs to you.
3. Changes to the benefits of currently vested or retired members are an impairment of constitutional contract and property rights.

The agreement reached by stakeholders and the Educational Retirement Board is true to all these positions. It makes eligibility changes only for new employees. It does not change benefits. It moves toward solvency in 30 years by increasing both employee and employer contribution rates. While we would have preferred not to increase employees’ contribution rates, political reality intervened. However, we will work to increase salaries to cover the increase and to protect employees making less than $20,000 annually. If the facts don’t work with policymakers, try these three quotes that politicians should understand, especially in an election year:

1. A politician is known by the promises he keeps.
2. There is no greater fraud than a promise not kept. —Gaelic Proverb
3. Losers make promises they often break. Winners make commitments they always keep. —Denis Waitley

The solvency of the Education Retirement System will once again be a major issue in this year’s legislative session. This month’s column is a guide to talking with policy makers about this issue.

During my last year as a teacher on the public payroll my compensation package consisted of my salary, my employer paid health benefits (including sick leave), and the portion of my future retirement benefit that I earned that year. If I had been unable to fulfill my obligation for any day of my 184 day contract, an appropriate amount of each component of my compensation package would have been deducted. The retirement benefit I earned that year (since I was already vested in the system with more than five years experience) was one year of credit for a retirement qualification that allowed me to retire after 25 years, at age 60, or when my age and service equaled 75; with a multiplier of 2.35% of my five year average annual salary times my years of service; and with an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) starting at age 65 equal to one half of the consumer price index, capped at a maximum of 4%.

I don’t believe anyone would suggest that the Legislature or anyone else could come to me and say we’ve changed our mind about how much salary you earned in the 1992-1993 school year for the days you worked; we want $5,000 dollars back. Irrational, stupid, unrealistic scenario, right? However, there are some, unfortunately including a couple of members of the Educational Retirement Board and at least some of the legislators, who suggest I be forced to give up part of my already earned compensation for that school year; namely my eligibility for the COLA as described above. For those of you still working who are vested, but more than ten years away from retirement, the suggestion is that you give up part of the credit you earned toward retirement eligibility by imposing a new minimum retirement age of 55! That’s right; you earned it, but give it back!

You earned the retirement eligibility, but you also earned some actual cash toward retirement. Some would have you and the public believe that your retirement benefits are a gift from taxpayers. They are not. Out of every dollar that funds your pension (and health insurance, for that matter) 100 cents comes from you! We use words like “contribute” to indicate how much our public employers set aside to pay for our retirement plans. Those words make it sound like a gift. They really only indicate how the money that funds our retirement system are accumulated and accounted for, either a direct contribution taken from you or deferred compensation from your employer.

Your pension plan is the direct result of your contributions and deferred compensation—money that you would have been paid as cash salary but, instead, had placed in a state operated pension fund where the money can be professionally invested (at a lower cost of management) for the future.

Since it is true that pension and benefit money is money that already belongs to public school employees, some might ask why employees would not just take the cash as direct compensation and do their own investing for their retirement through their own individual retirement plans.

Pulitzer Prize winning tax reporter, David Cay Johnston, writes, “Expecting individuals to be experts at investing their retirement money in defined contribution plans — instead of pooling the money so professional investors can manage the money as is done in defined benefit plans — is not sound economics. The concept, at its most basic, is buying wholesale instead of retail. Wholesale is cheaper for the buyers. That is, it saves taxpayers money.”
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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
nea-nm.org

Winter 2013
Hall of Fame Recipients Feted

This year’s class of NEA-NM Hall of Fame honorees was joined by a ballroom full of family, friends, and fellow NEA members ready to pay homage to their lifetime of service as NEA advocates and leaders, as well as education employees. This year’s recipients are: Steve Black, Deming; Kay Hannum, Hobbs; Donna Stromei, Belen; Helen Davis, Las Cruces; and Maryanne Sanders, Las Vegas.

Special Awards

Special Recognition Awards were also presented at Council. Those award recipients are: Judith Pingel, Alamogordo: Advocate of the Year, Pandora Van Auken, Alamogordo: ESP of the Year, Bernice Benally (posthumous): Friend of Education, Dr. Melvin Morgan and Gary Perkowski: Administrator Friends of Education, Rebecca Rivera, Belen: Teaching Excellence Award and Patricia Burnam, Las Cruces: Human and Civil Rights Award.
Delegates Deliberate

Over 150 members from across the state convened in Albuquerque on October 20, 2012 for the Annual Delegate Council. Delegates acted on NEA-NM business, such as the joint legislative platform, received reports from the Education Retirement Board as well as the Public School Insurance Authority, heard the keynote address from NEA national Vice-President, Lily Eskelsen, and took the time to make over 1700 contacts by phone call and text urging colleagues, friends and family to vote and vote for NEA-NM recommended candidates. Not bad for one day’s work.*
For the Office of NEA-NM President

Betty Patterson, NEA-Las Cruces

I have been teaching special education for 36 years. I served at the state level on the NEA-NM Board and as your Vice-President for the past 6 years and served as local AR, vice-president, president, employee rights chair and on the bargaining team of NEA-Las Cruces, the largest NEA-NM local. I have mentored many new teachers and presently 8 of my student teachers are teaching in Las Cruces. I served on many state committees including Student Restraint and Seclusion, RTI, and currently on the NM Teacher Evaluation committee. I believe in Public Education and know it is the answer to our future. I know how hard we work as educators and support professionals. The job is becoming more challenging and I am up to the challenge of being your voice as we work to take charge of our professions! I am ready to serve as your President so that together we can make our state education system one that works for students and educators! I would appreciate your vote. Thank you for taking time to make sure your voice is heard by voting. Vote Betty Patterson—I have the experience and the commitment to represent you as your President!

In accordance with Standing Rule 9, since only one candidate declared, Betty Patterson was declared elected on December 10, 2012, after the withdrawal of the only other declared candidate on December 1, 2012. The standing rule states, “If the number of candidates nominated, including write-in candidates who have declared their write-in candidacy in accordance with timelines and procedures established by the Elections Committee, equals the number of positions to be filled, the Board of Directors shall declare such candidates elected.”

For the Office of NEA-NM Vice President

Judith Pingel, NEA-Alamogordo

Advocacy is my game, Judith is my name. I would like your vote for NEA-NM Vice President. I am the NEA-NM 2012 Advocate of the Year. My journey with NEA began 25 years ago when I signed a membership form as a student teacher. I have been privileged to serve as an Area Representative, NEA-Alamogordo Vice President and for the last six years NEA-Alamogordo President. Through my elected duties I have been able to lead a great group of members to accomplish great things. One such accomplishment was to bring collective bargaining back to Alamogordo and we have had a CBA for the last six years. Being in education is a calling, a calling to be a part of our most precious resource: our children. It would be a privilege to share your voice. As Vice President of NEA-NM, I would feel honored to represent the educational professionals of New Mexico as we discern our role in our local, state, and national educational forum.

Mary K. Parr-Sanchez, NEA-Las Cruces

I have had the privilege of serving as your NEA Alternate Director for three years, and I currently represent you on the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA) Board of Directors. I have been committed to NEA at all levels for twenty-two years. Locally, I have served as a board member, employee rights advocate, bargaining team member, vice-president and First Lady to my husband, Patrick, who is President of NEA-LC. The most important reason why I am running for Vice President is that public education is under attack, and the biggest losers will be our students. I am part Mohawk Indian from the St. Regis tribe, part of the Iroquois Confederation. We are a warrior people, and I am a fighter. Educators are struggling with the increasing pressures of the job with fewer and fewer people to carry out the ever increasing work load. Minimizing our professional expertise is not the way to higher test scores. There is a saying “that the beatings will continue until morale improves.” I believe this best represents the state of public school employees. I want to fight for our “creative space”, and I am asking for your vote.
NEA - New Mexico 2012-2013 Election Calendar

Become Active: Go To nea-nm.org for NEA-NM’s Call for Nominations Information

01/28/13 Postcards with instructions for electronic voting (and instructions for a request for optional paper ballots) will be distributed via direct mail to eligible member voters, including retired members eligible to vote for delegate and retired member of the Board of Directors. Electronic voting begins.

02/15/13 Electronic voting closes at 5 PM MST. Postmark deadline* for eligible voters to return Optional Paper Ballots to NEA-NM.

02/22/13 Deadline** for receipt of Optional Paper Ballots at NEA-NM Headquarters by 5 PM.

02/23/13 Elections Committee Tally Subcommittee will meet at 10 AM in a place to be determined to tally election results and set procedures for a runoff election, if necessary.

02/25/13 Elections Committee will report election results to NEA-NM Board of Directors for certification by conference call.

03/04/13 If a runoff election is required, Postcards with instructions for electronic voting (and instructions for a request for optional paper ballots) will be distributed via direct mail to eligible member voters.

03/22/13 Electronic voting in runoff elections closes at 5 PM MST. Postmark deadline for eligible member voters to return Optional Paper Run-off Ballots, if any, to NEA-NM.

03/28/13 Deadline for actual receipt of Optional Paper Ballots at NEA-NM Headquarters by 5 PM.

04/06/13 Elections Committee Tally Subcommittee will meet in a place to be determined to tally runoff election results, if any.

04/13/13 Elections Committee will report runoff election results, if any, to NEA-NM Board of Directors for certification. Determination of At-Large elections, if any, required at 2012 Delegate Council.

NEA Representative Assembly Delegate Deadlines

02/15/13 Local Associations of 76 or more members, as of January 15, 2013 receive allocations, instructions, and delegate forms from NEA

03/15/13 State receives Student Delegate Allocation and conducts Student Election with same return deadlines as indicated for the runoff election in the elections calendar if any Student Nominations were received

02/18/13- Local Associations conduct local RA Delegate elections, ensuring notes:

04/01/13 open nominations and one-person one-vote secret ballots

04/09/13 Deadline for receipt of local delegate forms by NEA-New Mexico

05/15/13 Deadline for receipt of all local, state, and cluster delegate forms by NEA

Notes: Elections Committee will make an effort to contact all candidates by phone, or candidates may call Elections Committee Chair for results. The board will do a follow-up letter to each candidate.

STAY HEALTHY THIS WINTER!

Winter in New Mexico’s majestic mountains and high deserts may appear pure, white and peaceful, but hazards often lurk in the brisk, frosty air.

“Viruses like the common cold and flu thrive during the winter months,” says Steve Quach, M.D., chief medical officer at University of Texas Medical Branch Health System in Galveston, Texas. “When it’s cold outside, people spend time together indoors, and that’s when transmission of these infectious diseases happens.”

But colds and flu aren’t the only threats this time of year. In fact, studies show that bronchitis, heart attacks, asthma attacks and even broken hips seem to spike when it’s cold outside. So while you’re navigating winter’s wonderland, watch out for these six seasonal threats:

1. Colds. Americans contract a whopping 1 billion colds every year, and educators are especially vulnerable because they’re constantly exposed to sick kids, germs and end-of-semester stress. “Stay away from people who are sick, and wash your hands,” urges Quach. Viruses spread when infected cough or sneeze droplets move through the air, or when you touch contaminated surfaces and then touch your mouth or nose.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands with soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds, or about the time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice. And make sure the kids in your class have access to running water and soap or hand sanitizers.

2. Flu. Flu infections are responsible for 36,000 deaths every year—and winter is peak season. Cooler air and less daylight spur viruses to replicate after lying dormant during the warmer months. Get a flu shot, or take a whiff of the alternative FluMist, and regularly rinse your nose with saltwater to prevent viruses from taking hold. Then keep your immune system strong by maintaining a healthful sleep, diet and exercise regimen.

“Raising your core body temperature through exercise may help ward off bacteria and viruses,” because they can’t survive in a warm environment, says Amy Hendel, PA, author of The 4 Habits of Healthy Families. Keeping a humidifier in the classroom may help, too: Dry mucous membranes in your nose and throat can crack, creating a place where viruses can enter the body. As with colds, stay away from people who are sick, and wash your hands frequently.

3. Bronchitis. A catch-all term, bronchitis describes inflammation of the bronchial tubes that carry air to your lungs. You may have a cough that brings up mucus, find yourself wheezing during a lecture, and suffer from chest pain, fever and shortness of breath. “Bronchitis is similar to the common cold,” Quach says. “It just travels down into the lungs.”

His advice: Take the same steps you would take to prevent a cold or flu, and bolster your immune system by eating right, exercising and getting enough sleep. Also avoid lung irritants such as tobacco smoke, including secondhand smoke, dust, fumes, vapors and air pollution.

4. Asthma. “The No. 1 trigger for asthma is respiratory infection like the common cold or flu,” Quach says. To avoid an attack, keep indoor air clean by wiping down surfaces regularly and using a HEPA air purifier. People spend more time indoors during the winter and therefore more time surrounded by—and breathing in—indoor allergens and cold and flu germs.

Taking steps to maintain your health is the key. When you’re outside, protect your lungs from the cold air by loosely wrapping a scarf around your nose and mouth to warm the air you breathe. And if your asthma flares when you exercise in cold weather, talk to a doctor about using an inhaler 10-20 minutes before you get moving.

5. Heart attacks. When you’re cold, your blood vessels constrict to retain body heat and blood pressure spikes, placing added stress on your heart. Couple your heart’s natural inefficiency when it gets chilly with strenuous activities such as shoveling snow or chasing after children, and you can trigger a heart attack. Studies show a sudden increase in heart attacks after blizzards, especially if the snow is wet and heavy.

If you must pick up a shovel, warm up the body first with a few stretching exercises, and take frequent breaks. In addition to shoveling, any physical exercise is hard on the heart during the winter, especially if you’ve been in an exercise lull.

6. Falls. Falls are more common when it’s cold, thanks to slippery ice and powder packed snow. To get through the season unscathed, make sure you’re aware of your environment—black tops can be particularly hazardous—and watch where you step.

“People who are older and who have less muscle tone and strength need to be especially cautious,” Quach says. Not only are seniors at higher risk of falls, they’re also more likely to suffer complications (such as a broken hip) when they do take a tumble. Quach recommends searching out comfortable shoes that have grip on the sole as opposed to shoes that are completely flat.

Use the tips for a healthier, safer winter. And if all else fails, Enjoy a big warm bowl of famous New Mexico Pozole.
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Keleher and McLeod Scholarship Award

All eligible NEA-NM certified and educational support members are invited to submit an application for the Keleher and McLeod Distinguished Scholarship Award for 2013. The award is presented yearly to a NEA-New Mexico member or members who will be taking classes (online or on campus) at the University of New Mexico.

The Keleher and McLeod Law Firm created an endowment at the University of New Mexico, earnings from which are to assist an NEA-NM member or members in furthering their education each summer. The firm represented the Public Service Company of New Mexico in a lawsuit against several natural gas producers in the San Juan Basin in the early 1980’s. The seven original plaintiffs in the suit included five NEA-NM leaders who, with the support of the Association, desired to see the price of natural gas reduced for residential customers and school districts.

The NEA-NM Education Issues Committee has been designated as the body to choose the scholarship recipient(s). The scholarship will consist of a sum to cover the cost of summer school tuition and books for coursework that will be beneficial to school employees in the performance of their jobs. Deadline for submission is May 18, 2013.

Surviving the Life... continued from front page

year and another good reason for a salary increase); and a minimum retirement age of 55 and COLA eligibility at 67 for NEW employees hired after 6/30/12 once this proposed legislation becomes law. Legislative momentum seems to be building for this measure and it will require the Governor to sign it into law. There are strong places like Las Cruces, Española, and Las Vegas. We also did it in harder places like Roswell, Rio Rancho, and Valencia County. And because of your presence, we won. We won a bigger margin in the state House, we won a strong majority in the state Senate; and we won two state judicial positions, two Congressional seats, a US Senate seat, and the highest office in the land. Because of your commitment we won 74% of our recommended races. But just like the Powerball winners, you must also be present to cash in the ticket before the deadline. Come January 15, 2013, YOU and all public school employees will have 60 days to cash in your ticket by being present and holding those candidates for whom you worked accountable to YOU their constituents. YOU will have 60 days to write them, email them, text them (especially after a wrong vote in committee), call them and visit them at home and in Santa Fe. Come to our annual Legislative Training on Wednesday, January 23, 2013 in Santa Fe. Get the latest information before personally visiting your legislators then speak with them again that evening at our annual Legislative Reception at NEA-NM Headquarters. Take the information back to your locals and get your colleagues on board to use those 60 days to get them to support and advocate for what's right for our public school employees, not just what's left. Contact your local president and say you want to be PRESENT on January 23, 2013 and throughout the session.

‘Nuff Said, Eduardo, Editor *

For registration information visit: nea-nm.org

FORMATION: Putting Kids First • Promoting Professional Excellence • Improving the Well-Being of School Employees

Winter 2013 11
Stand Proud, Speak Loud: Organize for Power
NEA-NM ESP Conference
March 23, 2013
Las Cruces
Location: Centennial High School, Las Cruces, NM
Time: 8:30 AM – 4 PM
Registration Fee: $20 (please contact your local president for possible funding by the local/region to attend)
Lodging: Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces (Free double occupancy; please see NEA-NM website for details.)

Participants will:
1. Learn why it’s important that ESP’s become active in organizing.
2. Learn how organizing is beneficial for the collective bargaining process.
3. Have hands-on skill building on engaging potential members through organizing and the potential activist.
4. Learn how the actions of the 2013 Legislature will impact employees.

NEA-NM
Spring Conference
April 27, 2013
Santa Fe
Location: NEA-NM Headquarters Building
Time: 9 AM - 4 PM
Registration fee: $20
Lodging: Residence Inn by Marriott-Santa Fe $87 Double/Single
Hotel Cutoff Date: April 15, 2013

Participants will:
1. Learn how the actions of the 2013 Legislature will impact employees and bargaining strategy.
2. Have hands-on skill building in developing effective bargaining proposals.
3. Share effective organizing strategies for achieving a strong collective bargaining agreement.
4. Learn how to use bargaining to enhance organizational effectiveness, including building membership, building relationships and building a local communication system.