

The ACE Link

THE ANCHORAGE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION



VOLUME
4

May 8 Elections for Executive Board

Congratulations and thank you to ACE President Duane Moran, who was re-elected as President, and to Russell Jackson, who was elected as 1st Vice President.

Meet Your 2009-2012 ACE Negotiating Team

In March, ACE's five-member Negotiating Team was elected from a strong field of 12 candidates. The election was held early in order to take advantage of APEA-sponsored negotiation training in April. The Team is now preparing for bargaining, which begins in the fall. Our negotiators are investigating a variety of ways to get member input. These will include site meetings, employee group meetings, online surveys, and even some new web 2.0 tools. The team looks forward to hearing your concerns. Member input will be of critical importance due to the wide range of our needs and the huge diversity of jobs we hold.

Negotiating Team



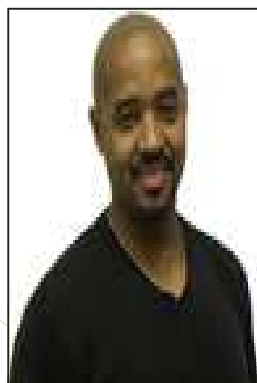
Kristine Liebner is Coordinator of Program Evaluation for ASD's Assessment and Evaluation Department and an ACE Employee Representative. She holds certificates in both mediation and restorative justice and has expertise in survey research and data analysis.



Steve Ex is ASD Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator. He has been a social studies teacher, an AEA Representative, a law clerk, and a board member of several community organizations.



Susan Williams is Manger of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program for ASD. She is a former ACE Board member and a current Employee Representative.



Russell Jackson works in Payroll Services as a Payroll Specialist. He is a former Vice President and Representative for TOTEM, and is ACE's newly-elected 1st Vice President.



Mike Fleckenstein is a Database Analyst in the ASD Information Technology department. He is a skilled collaborator and a member of our 2006-2009 negotiating team.

Inside Issues . . .

May 8th Elections 1

ACE/APEA in Juneau 2
By Corinne McVee

ACE Contract Negotiation 2
By Jennifer Madsen

Health Benefits Update 2
By Duane Moran

Environmental Safety Task Force 3
By Jennifer Nicoletto

Second Vice President 5
By Corinne McVee

Our entire Negotiating Team is committed to working hard for a contract that provides the wages, benefits and working conditions we all deserve.

ACE Contract Negotiations — We need to hear your voice!

By Jennifer Madsen

Your negotiating team needs information from you in order to achieve a contract that reflects the needs of the membership. We will provide you with multiple opportunities to have your voice heard. We encourage you to take advantage of all these opportunities.

Contract Survey (online or hardcopy)

- Constituency meetings
- General membership meeting

One-on-One with members and negotiators

We recommend you have some familiarity with your contract. To download the contract follow the link:

<http://www.aceaft.com/PDF/LAB-901.pdf>

To fill out your survey now please follow the link below.

<http://leadernet.aft.org/surveymaker/take/survey.cfm?id=845be45d-06a3-1217-2cfa-1bdd1e9bb91e> or you may access the survey from the ACE website at <http://www.aceaft.com>

If you prefer a hardcopy of the survey, please contact:
Jennifer Madsen at the APEA/AFT office 274-1688.

You may contact an elected negotiator directly by email as well.

Steve Ex	Ex_Steve@asdk12.org
Mike Fleckenstein	Fleckenstein_Mike@asdk12.org
Russell Jackson	Jackson_Russell@asdk12.org
Kristine Liebner	Liebner_Kristine@asdk12.org
Susan Williams	Williams_Susan@asdk12.org

Health Benefits Update

By Duane Moran

As you know, there have been several changes to the health benefits for the coming year. This spring, the ASD School Board reviewed the Aetna renewal recommended by the Health Benefit Task Force Committee. This committee consists of two representatives from each bargaining group, key ASD Administrators, and ASD's benefits consultant. Our two representatives are ACE member Ruth Jean Shaw and APEA staff member Dennis Geary. The Board approved the 2008-2009 Aetna renewal on April 28, 2008. By early May, members should have received a letter announcing the changes, followed by the "Open Enrollment" form in mid-May.

There are many reasons why our renewal costs increase each year. Due to our extremely high claim costs in the past fiscal year (81% increase in large claim costs), along with other medical increases affecting health plans throughout the nation, ASD was faced with difficult decisions to reduce some of the benefit levels. Without making any changes to our health plan, Aetna's original renewal increase would have been **34.96%**! With the plan changes proposed, we were able to negotiate an overall 15.15 % increase with the carrier. The Task Force worked very diligently to keep our insurance intact as much as possible, taking into consideration the impact this would have on our employees and their families, and to balance the cost containment issues.

We can all help keep costs down in such ways as using the mail order prescription service whenever possible, avoiding the emergency room if a visit to a doctor's office or urgent care center would suffice, and checking for medical billing mistakes.

Attention Members

Our current contract is in effect through June 30, 2009. Your elected bargaining team is now preparing for negotiations. If you wish to maximize your voice, please be sure to provide your current non-work phone number (home, cell), home address, and non-work email. Please email that contact information to jmadsen@apea-aft.org or phone Alana at the ACE/APEA/AFT office: 274-1688.



Solidarity Night at the Ball Park!

Wednesday, June 25th 7:00 p.m. at Mulcahy Stadium Anchorage Glacier Pilots vs. Anchorage Bucs Free Admission for Union Members!



Environmental Safety Task Force

By Jennifer Nicoletto

In Spring of 2006, a five member task force, of which I was a member, compiled results from a survey that asked our members what issues related to safety and security affected them.

In answer to the question: What happened with the Environmental Safety Task Force findings of May 2006...? The task force found many of our schools feeling safe and untouched by the violence that has increased in our city and in all of those cases it was due to communication within the school between administration and staff, thus being prepared and unified.

Some of the areas that were targeted for concern and their changes (so far) are as follows.

21st Century

The after school programs, specifically 21st Century, staff had concerns of liability and responsibility for medical attention after school and unfamiliarity with emergency procedures if a catastrophic emergency happened. Procedures have been addressed and members trained, communication has significantly improved, and continuing concerns are being addressed.

Polaris K-12

There was a complaint from Polaris K-12 concerning Spring flooding of their playground. ASD did extensive work in 2006 to improve the drainage problem and the snow barn next door has been relocated, the problem has been taken care of.

Security Resource Officers

Members wanted to know the reason Security Resource Officers (SROs) were in our schools. I spoke with Officer Steve Boltz (SRO at ERHS) he outlined their duties as being Patrol Officers; providing education, prevention, handling criminal activity in the schools and the surrounding community, and assisting fellow officers. The SROs are not assigned to a school; they are assigned to an area of the community and assisting at the schools. Officer Boltz made it clear that the SROs are there as a positive presence, helping in any way they can.

Communication Between Members and Supervisors

There were many concerns that communication between members and supervisors was low or non-existent. Through work with the union and its members, this communication has improved significantly and continues to improve.

Safety Security Training

District-wide a common question from safety security members was training; could there be standardized training for all safety security members, so that security would be consistent on basic responses to building and student issues? This is an issue that is currently being looked at, it has been acknowledged that there is a need and options are being discussed.

Maybe the most asked question was from the safety security members: How can we get better radio communication within our building and surrounding grounds. For this Duane Moran (ACE President) and I met with Mark Mew, Director of Security and Emergency Preparedness. Our meeting produced much needed background surrounding the new radio systems in ASD schools, and what it took to get the technology and funding. This system has been in the works for 4 years. Funding and technology have taken this long to come together. Once up and running (the first system is being installed at Bartlett HS), the system will be a high tech, interconnecting network that, if needed, First Responders and Homeland Security would be readily available. This system would not only be a school communications system but a high tech community safety connection.

ACE/APEA in Juneau!

By Corinne McVee



APEA members meet with Senator Betty Davis in March. Standing, L-R: Josh Miller (Valdez Federation of Teachers), Corinne McVee and Duane Moran (ACE), Ellen Fischer (Valdez FT), and Bill Felty (TOTEM). Seated: Senator Betty Davis, D-Anchorage.

The halls of the Alaska State Capitol in Juneau were a bit crowded on March 3 and 4, 2008, as over 30 members of APEA descended on the Alaska Legislature! Duane Moran, ACE President, serves on the APEA Board of Directors and I (Corinne McVee, ACE 2nd Vice President) serve on the board of APEA's Employees Political Information Committee (EPIC). Both boards, which usually meet via teleconference, held simultaneous face-to-face meetings in Juneau. All agreed that this rare chance to meet together in the same room was valuable and productive.

The meetings were well worth the trip, but the icing on the cake was the lobbying we were able to do at the Capitol. We all felt that as long as we were in Juneau during the legislative session, we ought to get more "bang for the buck." So, with the help of APEA Political Organizer Peggy Wilcox, we lobbied the Alaska Legislature for two solid days! Peggy organized us into small groups and made dozens of appointments with legislators from our own districts as well as others. We met with those who support our issues (easy job) as well as those who do not (not so easy). For those legislators who are not supportive of public employees, we tried to highlight the contributions we make, and to make the case for fair compensation as an

incentive to attract and retain career-minded public servants.

Someone from the APEA state office had the foresight to provide us all with "uniforms" – blue fleece vests with a gold-embroidered APEA logo. Very Alaskan looking! Every where we went, we were identifiable and associated with an organization that had unity. Rows of blue fleece vests lined the galleries as we were individually introduced by our respective legislators on the House and Senate floors. No one could walk through the Capitol hallways without seeing a group of blue fleece wearers, waiting for an appointment or chatting with a legislator.

APEA members addressed many big issues, including school funding, longevity steps for state employees, and increases to unemployment compensation. But the most intense lobbying was in support of Senate Bill 183, the bill that would give new public employees and teachers the option of returning to a Defined Benefit system. Although the bill has not yet passed into law, we believe that our lobbying efforts played a part in the bill's progress. By the end of session, it had passed out of three committees and stalled in Finance. APEA is part of the Alaska Public Pension Coalition, a growing organization that will not rest until the law is changed so that Alaska's public employees can have a secure, dignified retirement.

NEA-Alaska was also in Juneau for a board meeting. Their 35 members also lobbied intensely. It was good to have company in the Capitol! More importantly, APEA and NEA held a joint reception for all Alaska legislators and their staff members. This was a great opportunity to gather in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Some of the best lobbying probably happened there.

In Juneau we were also fortunate to hear a presentation by Representative Dave Guttenberg, D-Fairbanks, and get the latest Capitol updates from APEA Legislative Liaison Cindy Spanyers. Sam Trivette, president of Retired Public Employees Association, filled us in on the efforts to pass SB 183. Sam is a walking encyclopedia when it comes to this subject. Watch for a feature on Sam in the next newsletter.

Second Vice President

By Corinne McVee

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the ACE membership this past year. The office of 2nd Vice President is in charge of elections and political/legislative information. This year, I have been in charge of elections for ACE Negotiating Team and Executive Board. It's been exciting to see so many members step up to the plate and run for important positions.

As ACE's representative on APEA's statewide EPIC (Employee Political Information Committee) board, I have learned a great deal about local, state, and national politics as they relate to the needs and concerns of our members. EPIC meets monthly, via teleconference, to discuss candidate endorsements and keep up to date on political happenings. We keep a close watch on elections, endorse candidates, and keep up with the flurry of activity during the Alaska legislative session. In March 2008, the EPIC board held a very productive meeting in Juneau. (see p. 3)

Locally, I represent ACE at Anchorage's Central Labor Council (CLC). This group meets at least once per month to address local labor concerns. Earlier this year, all candidates for Anchorage assembly and school board seats were given a detailed questionnaire and an opportunity for a live interview before the CLC. I found this process to be very informative and fascinating! I'm happy to say that most candidates endorsed by EPIC and CLC were successful in the recent Assembly races. Members of labor unions were out in force during the weeks before the election. I truly enjoyed working on the campaign of my choice and I know it made a difference!

These were some of the highlights of a very busy year. I look forward to my continued service on the ACE Executive Board.

ACE Employee Representatives

Russell Jackson
748-8410

Delores Winton
348-5122

Kristine Liebner
742-4425

Michael Kerosky
742-4161

Randall Laws
346-1657

Edie Knapp
348-5207

Joel Carter
742-6507

Matt Nolan
742-6526

Duane Moran
742-3770

Susan Williams
742-4174

Curtis Young
748-8410

Anchorage Council of Education, Local 4425
APEA/AFT (AFL-CIO)
3310 Arctic Blvd, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99503



Summer Solidarity Picnic

Join IBEW 1547's Unit 101 and approximately 25 other unions, including APEA, in Anchorage for this year's **Summer Solidarity Picnic on Sunday, June 29, 2008**, noon - 4pm at the West End of the Park Strip in Anchorage. There will be free food, games for the kids, live music and a chance for solidarity with all the union members of Anchorage and their families.



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Put your ACE-AFT membership to work for you! Take advantage of the many benefits you receive as a member. Traveling this summer? Members get discounts on hotels, auto rentals, even theme parks. Need help managing your finances? Check out AFT's credit card, loans, and credit counseling. These and many more great deals can be found at <http://www.aft.org/aftplus/>.