

Important Dates

Thursday, February 21

Professional Day/Clerical Day
No Classes K-6

Friday, February 22

Conference Day
No Classes K-12

Tuesday, February 26

Board of Education
Work Session, 6 p.m.
Administration Building

Monday, March 4

SHTA Executive Board
Woodbury, 4:30 p.m.

SHTA news

February 19, 2013

ISSUE NO. 5

Message From the President

It has been a busy start to the New Year. I met with Vice-President Dollye Finney and Dr. Stokes to discuss effective and consistent communication between administrators and staff at several buildings. I corresponded with Evaluation Committee members concerning administrative follow-through on the new evaluation process. I worked with Mike Sears on issues related to medical leave and sick days. I attended Instructional Council to hear updates about developing security protocols and the status of the district. It's been an active time in our Association and will undoubtedly continue to be for the foreseeable future.

Hopefully, by now, you have had the opportunity to peruse the letter I sent out about the proposed dues increase on the table for next month's representative council meeting. What I didn't mention is that I was actually a part of the incoming class of teachers that voted on the increase in 1997. Now I find myself as President as we prepare to vote on another increase. In this 16 year time period, I have seen the ups and downs that have impacted our Association and our profession.

I have benefitted significantly from the work of the SHTA. I have appreciated increases in compensation as my experience and education has increased and as a result of the contract negotiations, our negotiation teams and collective dues have made possible. I have enjoyed a fair and clear evaluation process as I proceeded through non-tenure to tenure status as a result of an active Teachers Education Committee of the SHTA. I have navigated disagreements with my administrators with the help of my SHTA building representative. I have benefitted from job security as a result of our dedication in fighting and overturning SB5. I have "grown up" as a teacher with the help of the SHTA and the previous leadership that has gone before me. I hope that I can help nurture the SHTA as it continues to grow into the future. This is why I support an increase.

The process is not over. We will discuss the increase as a representative body at March's representative council meeting. The amount of the increase is not set in stone. Let your representatives know what you think is fair and reasonable. Let me know if you wish. I know that our wages may have stagnated and our benefits have become more expensive. However, I also know that the quality of our SHTA representation has never lagged. You are the Shaker Heights Teachers Association. Please let your voices be heard.

Finally, I encourage you to seriously consider participating in the peer evaluation process that will begin next year. Lena Paskewitz and Andrew Glasier will elaborate on it further in their reports. House Bill 555 has made the evaluation process virtually impossible for our administrators. The vacuum created by this inability to execute all of these evaluations leaves a vacuum that I believe many privatized evaluation companies would love to fill. I would much prefer these evaluators come from among our own ranks and within our own buildings. However, it takes dedication from members willing to step up and take on these roles for this to happen.

As always, I am available to talk about any issue that you need to discuss. You can reach me by email morris_j@shaker.org or 295-6033. We still have work to do as an Association and as professional educators. It is my honor and privilege to serve as SHTA President to help us through this critical process.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A Night for the Red and White is fast approaching. A number of you have committed contributions to the Silent Auction. Thank you so much for your support. I hope that you are considering sharing this evening with other supporters of the Shaker Heights City Schools. *A Night for the Red & White* will be held on Saturday, March 9, 2013, 7:00 p.m., at the Tudor Arms Hotel. The Committee is again offering a special staff ticket price of \$90. I hope at this point that you have purchased a drawing ticket from your building representatives.

The SHTA Teacher Fellowships recipients are still encouraged to submit receipt documentation to collect reimbursement. This money can be used to enhance your professional development. I look forward to hearing from the Fellows.

I continue to work with William Scanlon on the SHTA Investments Committee. He is a diligent and fiscally responsible force in assuring our financial security. The committee meets at least twice annually with our Edward Jones Investments agent Brady Krebs, The other members of this committee are Matthew Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor and Todd Keitlen. The report of the current status of the General Fund can be found in this newsletter in the Treasurer's Report.

It is important to our professional future that we remain aware of the changes that face collective bargaining and issues surrounding the profession of teaching. We are entering a new era of teaching with legislative, licensing and evaluation issues looming in our very near futures. The local administrative changes are imminent and we need to maintain a strong presence and united front as a highly skilled teaching staff.

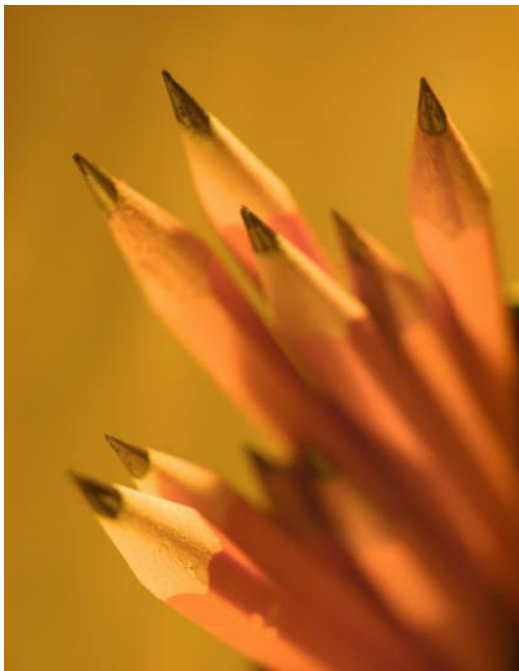
As always I continue to be proud of the work that we do and if you have questions please feel free to call me.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dollye Finney*

Monday, April 15
SHTA Representative Council
Lomond, 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23
Board of Education
Work Session, 6 p.m.
Administration Building

Monday, May 6
Teacher Appreciation Week
Begins
SHTA Executive Board
Woodbury, 4:30 p.m.



"Every truth has four corners: as a teacher I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three." -- Confucius

MORE IMPORTANT DATES

Saturday, March 9
A Night for the Red and White
Tudor Arms Hotel, 7 p.m.

Monday, March 11
SHTA Representative Council
Middle School, 4:30

Tuesday, March 12
Board of Education Meeting
Administration Bldg., 6 p.m.

Thursday, March 28
Spring Break Begins

Monday, April 8
Class Resume
SHTA Executive Board
Woodbury, 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 9
Board of Education
Meeting
Administration Bldg., 6 p.m.

TREASURER'S REPORT

At February's Representative Council meeting, the Investments Committee (Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Dollye Finney, and myself made a presentation to the Council (Chante Thomas-Taylor is also on the committee and could not attend). We outlined the duties of the Investments Committee and presented a short summary of our current financial situation. A brief summary of our presentation is below:

The Shaker Heights Teachers' Association has two sets of monies: our Edward Jones Investments (referred to as the General Fund) and our Key Bank holdings (referred to as the Operating Budget).

The Investments Committee performs the service of keeping an eye on the Association's General Fund and making decisions about changes to the investments or general investment strategies. The Investments Committee follows a very conservative investment strategy leading to the General Fund typically following the ups and downs of the market. The General Fund was down to almost \$500,000 shortly after the financial crisis hit and following the slow 6-year recovery of the market is currently around \$875,000.

The General Fund exists because of the contributions of members' dues over the 33-year history of our Association's independent status. The dues collected from members goes toward the Operating Budget and at the close of each fiscal year any money not spent could be added to the General Fund, or invested in local money markets. These past contributions along with returns from the investments grew the General Fund to what it is today. The General Fund has not been contributed to by members' dues or needed for yearly operating expenses since before 2005.

The Investments Committee emphasized that the General Fund is a legacy given to us by members-past. It serves as a negotiations tool and a support fund in case of costly legal action or a work stoppage. The Association's Income and Expenses for the past five years is shown below.

	Income	Expenses	Overall Change
2011-12	79,860.00	81,063.57	-1,203.57
2010-11	83,260.00	135,701.40	-52,441.40
2009-10	84,800.00	72,090.88	12,709.12
2008-09	84,600.00	80,679.91	3,920.09
2007-08	84,700.00	68,723.72	15,976.28
			-21,039.48

Overall, for the past five years, we have spent over \$20,000 more than we have brought in. The high cost of negotiations is reflected in the 2010-11 fiscal year. The next fiscal year (2013-14) will be a negotiations year.

The Investment Committee pointed out that the number of Association members has decreased recently and emphasized the need for a dues increase. The extra money brought in from the dues increase will be directed toward growing the General Fund.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

Budgeted Accounts on pages 6 & 7

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There were two notes from doctors about sick leave that raised questions recently about appropriate use of sick days. If you have a medical reason to use sick leave for an extended time (beyond ten days), make sure the note from your doctor mentions a medical condition that prevents you from being at work. Also, make sure the note comes from a doctor who you see regularly with whom you are a registered patient.

Article 10.03 in the contract states:

*“Prior to the issuance of any reprimand, warning or discipline, a teacher shall be advised of his/her right to SHTA representation. Once a teacher requests such SHTA representation, no interview/interrogation of the teacher shall occur unless an SHTA representative is present. **Evaluation conferences are not to be construed as reprimands, warnings or discipline by either the teacher or the administrator present at this conference.**”*

If you are meeting with an administrator about an observation and you “construe” the meeting to include “reprimands, warnings, or discipline”, then the administrator is violating the contract. You should ask to re-schedule the meeting when an SHTA representative can be present and walk out of the administrator’s office. You should also contact one of your building representatives as soon as possible.

Several members worked hard on the evaluation committees to prepare us for next year’s new evaluation procedures from the state. We are in a unique position of making our own destiny here because of a recent decision by the administration to allow peer evaluation. We are the only school district in Ohio doing this and possibly the only one in the nation. I strongly encourage you to consider peer evaluation and to consider becoming a peer evaluator yourself. Peer evaluation will help us maintain teaching as a profession. Imagine a time when private companies, such as Pearson, send in total strangers to evaluate teachers. Pearson would provide workbooks, pre-tests, post-tests, and test scores to districts. The Pearson test monitor will check in on us twice a year to make sure we are teaching to the test. Is this good practice or further privatization? Our peers make the best evaluators. They know the culture of our school and the challenges we face in the classroom every day. They will also push us to be better in meaningful ways that are about so much more than test scores.

The new evaluation system is one reason I believe we need to raise our dues significantly for next year. I expect more grievances and legal action on behalf of our members related to the state rating system and its reliance on test scores to grade teachers. These actions cost money, but they protect our members and they protect teaching as a profession. We also need to raise dues to prepare for another round of negotiations. Since a school levy will not be on the ballot until 2014, we will most likely negotiate two years in a row. Finally, we have to grow our General Fund in the event of a work stoppage. It currently is close to \$875,000, and our goal should be to have over \$1 million in the bank. The current salary schedule is in jeopardy. Salary cuts will be on the table for the next negotiations. I am prepared to go on strike to protect the salary schedule. When we have a work stoppage, we have to be able to pay the legal bills and provide our members with months of health insurance. A million dollars in the bank sends a powerful message to the administration, the school board, the community, and the state of Ohio that we take teaching seriously here. We deliver incredible educational opportunities to the young people of Shaker Heights every day. The community supports us because they see in their children the work we are all doing. We need to make sure other stakeholders do not take us for granted and that teaching and learning in Shaker Heights remains a serious endeavor.

*Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson*

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This month I answered a question from the personnel administrator regarding the impact of snow/calamity days on sick days and personal days. When the district announces that school will not be in session, employees who had requested a sick day or a personal day on the cancelled school day have it restored to them. I was glad to be available to clarify past practices.

At John Morris's request, I reviewed documents in the SHTA files. I also continued to work with our computer consultants on the SHTA web site.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, Chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Members of the Evaluation Committee will be presenting information about the new evaluation system in each building in the coming weeks. Presentations at the elementary buildings and Woodbury will take place on February 21, the Middle School presentation will take place on March 4, and the High School presentation will take place on March 11. I encourage you to give feedback and ask questions on the exit slip provided at your building presentation.

The pilot of our new system is progressing. Members who have been involved in the peer evaluation pilot report that the professional growth they have benefited from during the peer evaluation process has been exceptional. Given their success, the committee is moving forward with a widened peer evaluation pilot for the 2013-2014 school year. Teachers who are interested in joining the peer evaluation pilot should contact me via email. Our goal is to have a minimum of one peer evaluation pairing in each building. Interested members will receive an email with specifics about training and time commitments.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, Chairperson*

POLICY COMMITTEE

In the last newsletter my report focused on Becky Thomas's retyping of the Constitution and By-Laws. The old version was formatted in a structure that made it very difficult to quote from if you were referencing the Constitution and By-Laws. In the past month I have proofread the new document, and I do believe that it is identical to the old version when printed, and easier to use than the old version when cutting and pasting. You can see the updated look at <http://www.shtaweb.org>

*Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholtz, Chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Annual SHTA/Shaker Heights City Schools Spring Recognition Reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 23rd. This very special event will be held at Shaker Heights High School in the upper cafeteria. You will receive more information about

the Reception in the near future.

The Spring Social Hour that was scheduled at Pizzazz in March has been cancelled.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, Chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Payroll deduction for SHTA dues began with the October 16th paycheck - \$20 per pay for 10 pays. Payment for dues will be complete after the March 1st paycheck deduction.

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

"There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies."

-Robert Frost

FINANCIAL REPORT

7/1/12

2/15/13

COMPOSITE BALANCE

Balance 7/1/12	869,229.39
Receipts 7/1/12 to present	57,099.49
Change in Valuation 7/1/12 to present	<u>70,795.90</u>
	997,124.78
Expenditures 7/1/12 to present	-29,957.07
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2011-2012	<u>-1,196.78</u>
TOTAL	965,970.93

BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS

A. KEY BANK (2/3/13)

Certificates of deposit

29 mo. @ 0.149%-Matures on 2/6/14 21,222.30

Total Certificates of deposit 21,222.30

Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY) 69,581.13

Unposted deposits and transfers 0.00

90,803.43

Less outstanding checks -212.49

TOTAL KEY BANK 90,590.94

B. EDWARD JONES (2/3/13)

Regular Association Account 465,644.56

Advisory Solutions Account 409,735.43

875,379.99

TOTAL 965,970.93

Budgeted Accounts

<u>Account</u>	7/1/12					2/15/13
	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>Transfers out</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Transfers in</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Accounting	5000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	9302.00	4,651.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,651.00
Vice President	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Secretary	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Treasurer	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
P.R. & R. Chairperson	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Editor	4653.00	2,326.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,326.50
Building reps. and alternates	10000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Conferences and meetings	2500.00	1,971.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	528.68
Fellowships and Grants	3500.00	465.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,035.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00
Legal	5000.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	5,100.00
Negotiations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Executive Board expenses	500.00	524.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	-24.10
Officers' expenses	500.00	608.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	-108.57
Payroll taxes	550.00	263.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	286.94
Publications	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Public Relations	4000.00	1,070.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,929.01
Social	1800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	<u>5100.00</u>	<u>2,539.53</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,560.47</u>
TOTAL	79929.00	29,957.07	0.00	100.00	0.00	50,071.93

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

February 11, 2013
Shaker Heights High School

The President, Dr. John Morris, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Dr. John Morris welcomed the SHTA Representative Council on behalf of Michael Griffith, principal of Shaker Heights High School.

The minutes of the January meeting were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Scott reported that she was working on the spring evaluation process.

PTO REPORT: There was no representative from the PTO to give a report.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

PRESIDENT: Dr. Morris attended the last Instructional Council meeting, at which HB 555 was discussed. He announced the potential relationship between the district and Huntington Bank. He met with the Evaluation Committee and stated his support for the Peer Evaluation process the committee is working on. He worked with Mike Sears regarding Medical Leave and maternity issues. He requested that the administration standardize the process of granting extended sick days.

VICE-PRESIDENT: Dollye Finney told the Rep. Council members that the water bottles sent to the teachers of Sandy Hook should reach them on Valentine's Day. She encouraged members to make a donation to the silent auction for "A Night for the Red and White". She stated she will be getting the Apple T.V. for the Association's donation to the silent auction. She has been talking with administration about the need for clear and transparent communication between building administration and all staff members. She was meeting with the PTO Council's nominating committee for next year's PTO Council leadership.

SECRETARY: Matt Zucca announced that the ticket sales and drawing for the SHTA would be extended to February 25. He encouraged head reps. to continue to sell tickets.

TREASURER: Bill Scanlon discussed our current financial report.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PAST PRESIDENT: Becky Thomas stated she worked on clarifying past practice of restoring sick days to staff on calamity days. She worked on some website issues. She stated she would attend the next board meeting.

POLICY: Dave Klapholz stated the updated Constitution and By Laws would be available on the website.

TEACHER EDUCATION: Steven Smith had no report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Eileen Sweeney was unable to attend the meeting.

PUBLICATIONS: Andrew Glasier said that newsletter submissions are due on Wednesday. Please send them to him at glasier_a@shaker.org.

LEGAL AID: Wendy Lewis had no report.

LEGISLATIVE: Lena Paskewitz reported that there will be presentations about the next year's evaluation system in the upcoming months. She asked for membership participation for the Peer Evaluation Pilot Program, which includes 3 day training.

SOCIAL: Darlene Garrison stated she is working on the spring recognition reception, which will be May 23rd. She stated that the social event at Pizzazz, unfortunately, has been cancelled.

MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS: Stacy Elgart stated we currently have 399 members.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Mike Sears report working on sick day restoration and issues regarding maternity leave.

BUILDING REPORTS

The following reps asked questions, expressed concerns, or made statements on behalf of the membership in their buildings:

Onaway commented that their International Baccalaureate Program verification process went well.

The **Middle School** stated they were working on a tuition reimbursement issue.

The **High School** reported concerns about a dues increase.

SPECIAL SESSION

Investments Committee Report: Members of the Investments Committee; Bill Scanlon, Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, and Dollye Finney; gave a presentation. The presentation outlined the committee's responsibilities, decision-making process, and the history and performance of the Association's invested funds.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Steve Smith made a motion to increase the Association's Dues to \$350. Lena Paskewitz seconded the motion. The motion was open for discussion. It was stated that dues had not been raised since 1997. The motion was tabled for further discussion.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: John Morris thanked the High School for hosting the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, March 11, 2013 at the Middle School.

*Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca, Secretary*

PEER EVALUATION = PROFESSIONALISM

This newsletter is a publication of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association, an independent organization of professional educators in the Shaker Heights City School District. Signed editorials represent the opinion of the author(s) and may or may not reflect the thinking of other officers or members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. Members and friends of the Association are invited and encouraged to express their opinions or share information via this newsletter.

Historically, teachers have not been seen as professionals. Teachers work diligently to improve instruction yet many outside the profession label teachers as nonprofessionals and have created a slew of mandates that flagrantly demean our professional status as teachers, eroding our morale. The stunning changes in our evaluation system are an example of our diminished power. As you know, the Association and District's ability to control how teachers are evaluated has been wiped out by the legislature of Ohio. Under the new evaluation system, every teacher in the State of Ohio must be observed two to three times every school year. Fifty percent of our evaluation will be based on "Student Growth Measures" –measures that researchers have already proven statistically invalid and unreliable. To add to the struggle, our legislators continuously changing the parameters of the measurements in unpredictable and irrational ways, leaving the Ohio Department of Education scrambling to understand, articulate and implement the mandates (which could be another editorial).

Many speculate that these mandates were created to dismantle the public school system, or to allow corporations to make more money through privatizing the evaluation process. Companies such as Pearson and Battelle have mammoth lobbying power in Columbus. To avoid potential devastating effects of the profit motive in education, we need to convert to a Peer-Evaluation system. **ONLY TEACHERS CAN TRULY EVALUATE TEACHERS.** I don't say this lightly or to criticize our friends in administration. I say this because taking responsibility for evaluating our colleagues gives us power over our own profession.

Administrators have neither the time nor energy to evaluate every single teacher. In Shaker, the administration has come to the Association asking to work collaboratively on evaluations and asking for Peer-Evaluations to begin next year. Dr. Mark Freeman has spoken publicly about the power of Peer-Evaluation and its necessity in a high quality education system. Those that are piloting the Peer-Evaluation program have noticed tangible, practical improvements in their understanding of educational practices and procedures. Research has supported this – Peer-Evaluation helps professional educators at every level and stage in their career. Peer-Evaluation more closely resembles the evaluation process of other professionals, such as doctors and lawyers. It improves the process of teaching while empowering educators to enhance our beloved profession.

This is not to diminish the many obstacles or issues that need to be addressed - issues of fairness, how to deal with poor evaluations, and increased expectations to name a few. The members of the Evaluation Committee have been addressing these concerns. The truth is, we do not have all the answers and believe that by piloting the program and growing it organically we will be able to address those issues as an Association. The fact of the matter is we have been unable to find a single district in the United States that allows teachers to evaluate other teachers. This is new territory. Yet the research on peer-evaluations is clear; it improves practice and creates a more robust collaborative environment. In the end, as the district and Association has looked into the process, we have all asked ourselves, is this better for students? The answer is clearly yes. The tough questions and situations that we, as adults, may encounter are nothing compared to the improved education our students will be getting. Peer-Evaluation holds teachers accountable to teachers and that alone is both revolutionary and good for the educational process.

Please feel free to contact Addie Tobey (MS), Lena Paskewitz (FE), or me if you have interest in piloting the program or questions on Peer-Evaluation. And please consider signing up to be trained as a Peer-Evaluator.

AG

Letters to the Editor

I am writing this as a response to the concern over the increase in dues for SHTA. I have been at Woodbury for the past 19 years and a member of SHTA. The quality and personal attention that I have received throughout this time by our union has been immeasurable. I am struck by the difference in attention and support that my wife, also a teacher in a west side school district, receives from her nationally based union. Throughout the years when dealing with issues from maternity leave to family leave issues she received little guidance and support by a consultant, who was not even employed by her district. I have always received personal attention by not only our building reps, but by the officers of our association. The fact that larger school union organizations have only a partial understanding of the community, schools and political climate of that community has always made me question if they could serve the members to the level of our own SHTA.

Her dues were over \$800 last year!!!!

We need to support this increase in dues to both continue to be an association that believes in giving excellent service to its members and send the message to the next administration. This will be a clear statement that in this time when unions are being challenged that not only are we strong, but getting stronger. This sends the message!

Sincerely,
Todd Keitlen

Dear Editor:

Some members may be asking “Why now?” regarding the proposed increase to the SHTA dues. To answer, let me ask some additional questions. Did you see SB5 coming? Did you think that the state government in Ohio would attack workers’ rights? Did you think that workers in Wisconsin, Michigan, and other states would face so many challenges? I certainly did not.

When I was president of the SHTA, I knew that the General Fund was only growing through investment interest. At that time, it seemed fine. The use of the General Fund as a

“contingency fund” for a prolonged legal action or a work stoppage seemed remote. The amount in the fund seemed sufficient.

Politics has changed that view. Past members built this fund to provide the membership with the resources to face future challenges. Should the current membership be doing the same?

Sincerely,
Rebecca Thomas, Past President

"Due" The Right Thing

I thoroughly enjoy my job and I'm honored to be a teacher in Shaker Heights. Now that my wife teaches here as well - we are literally “all in” for Shaker Heights. This district is our livelihood: we both work very hard, are passionate our jobs, and love working in this district.

We will depend on our district to remain strong for students; providing them with a place to learn and we will also depend on this district to continue our teaching careers. Our profession constantly undergoes public scrutiny and next year, we will all be faced with a new evaluation system. In the face of such dramatic changes, we have the opportunity to make a strong statement--it's essential for our Association to have a powerful voice to speak on behalf of our educators. Increasing our membership dues will portray our dedication and devotion to our association, as well as provide a sense of appreciation for our positive interaction with the Association.

My goal is for members to create and maintain a strong General Fund in order for current and future members to experience the same benefits I have been provided.

I believe in the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I've seen firsthand the exhaustive hours our leadership puts forth on our behalf. I've seen them fight for our members long after their teaching duties have concluded for the day. And I believe now is the time to show support for our leadership and for our organization by increasing our dues. Are you ready to "due" the right thing?

Sincerely,
Steve Smith, New Teacher Committee