

SHTA *news*

No. 4 • 19 January 2010

Message From the President

Welcome back and thank you. On November 23 the membership voted to accept a one-year agreement. The participation in the vote was significant (nearly 80%) and the approval vote of 87.28% is very gratifying. I know the members of the negotiating team join me in thanking you for this demonstration of support. I hope you saw the article in the [Sun Press](#); it really focused on the importance of this settlement. It also included a reality check. While we, the teachers, are committed to doing our part in these difficult financial times, we need to maintain quality salaries so we can attract and retain the very best teachers. The Superintendent is quoted, "The quality of our schools depends largely on our ability to continue attracting top talent. We need to remain competitive." As the financial situation begins to improve, we expect to see this sentiment reflected in future negotiations.

At the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, January 12, the National Merit Scholars were recognized. After they were assembled on the stage of the High School Small Auditorium, the Superintendent asked the students to applaud their parents, teachers, and other supportive adults who contributed to their success. The students did so enthusiastically. What we do in our classrooms every day at every level makes a difference.

Before winter break I was asked to participate in our district's application for "Race to the Top" funds. As president of the SHTA, I signed a memorandum of understanding that we (the SHTA) would work within the parameters of the grant funds. Without participation of the teachers' association, the district could not apply and would miss out on the potential of millions of additional dollars. The district will be notified in the spring if any funds will be forthcoming. At that time, plans for using the funds will be presented. We will be negotiating in the fall and if specific contract language needs to be modified, we will do so and seek your approval.

Now, some politics. Did you see the headline and article in the Plain Dealer on January 3rd regarding pensions for public employees? In my opinion, this article was very inflammatory, attacking the retirement benefits guaranteed to different groups of public employees, including teachers. The article focused on provocative issues like retire/rehire (aka double dipping) and used rhetoric to imply that the retirement benefits for teachers significantly outpace those for non-public employees. After inciting the readers, there were some important facts buried in the article: teachers pay 10% of their salaries to the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS); the Board of Education pays 14% on our behalf. This is part of our overall compensation package. We do not have 401K plans or

receive stock options like many private sector employees. We do not even have the option of managing our own retirement funds. The money that we receive in retirement is our money—held for deferred payment by STRS. Americans have chosen to offer free public education and to pay for it with tax dollars. Our salaries and benefits are negotiated; our retirement system answers to the state legislature. When you read attacks like this, be prepared with clear information and facts. (FYI—you can access this article at Cleveland.com and use the site search with the terms Public Pension Tab Ohio. You will get the article along with comments from PD readers).

As we approach the end of the first semester, I want to remind you about the importance of planning for the future of the Association. Gary Raymont, who has worked diligently in the SHTA leadership for many years, is retiring in June. I am eligible to retire in 2011. Membership input and involvement is what makes our Association strong. Think about taking a more active role to maintain that strength. I appreciate the opportunity to represent you as president.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, president*

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy New Year to all! I hope that you are off to a positive and productive start to a new year. I also hope that your building reps have approached you to consider your contribution to the Silent Auction for the Night for the Red and White. The committee continues to support teacher attendance by offering a discounted ticket price of ninety dollars. I hope that you will contribute and plan to attend this event as it continues to provide substantial gifts to The Shaker Heights City Schools and it's a blast. The Silent Auction contribution forms are available on the Shaker Heights City School's Home Page under The Shaker Schools Foundation. Thank you again for your generous support and contributions. These contributions are due January 20, 2010!

The Night for The Red and White is being held at Landerhaven on March 13, 2010. Please see your Building Reps to purchase a chance to win tickets to the event and. The SHTA is offering a family membership to the Columbus Zoo, Aquarium & Zoombezi Bay, a gas card and a hotel package. Zoobezi is a water park owned by the Columbus Zoo.

If you are a recipient of the SHTA Fellowship I continue to urge you to submit your receipts for reimbursement.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dollye Finney, vice president*

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Welcome back and I hope everyone had a restful and healthy new year. Every year our health care providers raise rates on an annual basis. These rates are determined by the number of experiences (number of times you use your insurance) on a yearly basis.

Both insurance companies have raised their rates. These rates are negotiated down to a mutual agreement with Bryan Christman. Even though the rates have been raised, according to our contract we still only pay 8% of the premiums. This is why you saw an increase in your portion of the monthly premium.

In the next few weeks the Insurance Committee, which consists of representatives from all the unions, will be convening to discuss the issues regarding health care. I will keep everyone informed and share this information with you.

At the last two SHTA meetings I gave examples of maternity leave and FMLA to the representatives. Hopefully, your reps have a better understanding of how these different leaves are being used for our members.

The Association has sent a letter to the administration regarding working conditions that fall under the American Disability Act. It has been a month since we sent in this request. Hopefully, the administration will respond to this member and the Association **SOON**.

*Respectfully submitted,
Gary Raymond, chairperson*

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Investments Committee (Darcel Arrington, Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Dollye Finney, and myself) will be meeting in February to discuss our investments.

I am meeting with our accountant from Edward C. Hawkins & Co., Ltd. this month to go over our Form 990 tax filing for last fiscal year (2008-09), and to finalize our audit of last year's books.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

FINANCIAL		REPORT	
	7/1/09	1/16/10	
COMPOSITE BALANCE			
Balance 7/1/09			719,244.67
Receipts 7/1/09 to present			61,300.00
Change in Valuation 7/1/09 to present			94,374.22
			874,918.89
Expenditures 7/1/09 to present			-37,129.30
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2008-2009			<u>-2,106.60</u>
TOTAL			835,682.99
BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS			
A. BUCKEYE STATE CREDIT UNION (BSCU)			
Certificates of deposit 12/31/09			
24 mo. @ 3.0% APY-Matures on 2/02/11		43,081.03	
24 mo. @ 3.76% APY-Matures on 3/10/10		<u>21,373.67</u>	
Total Certificates of deposit			64,454.70
Savings accounts (0.50% APY) 12/31/09			101.30
Share draft account (0.25% APY) 12/31/09			1,920.20
Unposted deposits and transfers			<u>0.00</u>
			66,476.20
Less outstanding checks			<u>-33.44</u>
TOTAL BSCU			66,442.76
B. EDWARD JONES (12/31/09)			
Regular Association Account		368,102.61	
Advisory Solutions Account		<u>332,915.90</u>	
			<u>701,018.51</u>
C. KEY BANK (12/31/09)			
Certificates of deposit 12/6/09			
29 mo. @ 2.15%-Matures on 9/6/11		20,319.37	
15 mo. @ 1.9%-Matures on 10/17/10		14,110.87	
			34,430.24
Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY) 12/31/09			24,810.48
Unposted deposits and transfers			<u>9,580.00</u>
			68,820.72
Less outstanding checks			<u>-599.00</u>
TOTAL KEY BANK			68,221.72
TOTAL			835,682.99

Budgeted Accounts						
	7/1/09					1/16/10
Account	Budgeted	Debits	Transfers out	Credits	Transfers in	Balance
Accounting	5500.00	63.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,437.00
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	1,070.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,429.81
Contingency	250.00	77.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	172.68
Fellowships and Grants	4000.00	75.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,925.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00
Legal	5000.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,900.00
Negotiations	50000.00	7,116.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	42,883.59
Executive Board expenses	500.00	123.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	376.54
Officers' expenses	500.00	159.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	340.94
Payroll taxes	700.00	209.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	490.45
Professional day	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Publications	1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Public Relations	5000.00	1,971.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,028.72
Social	2500.00	340.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,160.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	9000.00	3,309.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,690.47
TOTAL	137929.00	37,129.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	100,799.70

SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

In the President's message, I expressed my appreciation for the voting turnout and the strong show of support you gave to the work of the Negotiating Team. Of course, since we approved a one-year contract, we will be negotiating again in the fall of this year. This spring, you will be asked for your input. Your responses truly did guide these negotiations.

I would like to thank the members of the Negotiating Team: Gary Raymont (Boulevard), John Morris (High School), Darlene Garrison (Woodbury), Mike Sears (Middle School), Dave Klapholz (High School), and Linda Roth (Middle School). The membership vote is a solid affirmation of your work!

If any member is interested in serving on the team this fall, please contact me via email (remember, Gary Raymont is retiring). My email is Thomas_R@shaker.org.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Plain Dealer published an analysis of the Ohio public pension plan and the challenges created by present economic circumstances. Depending on your perspective, Mark Puente's January 3 article was either a fair analysis of an unsustainable system or a flagrantly biased slam against the public-employee sector. The article is lengthy and troubling but worth reading (it can be accessed at www.cleveland.com). A major flaw, in my opinion, was the failure to articulate the differences between defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans. STRS is a defined-benefit plan (though ironically they are not presently defining the benefits) which Puente seems to believe is inherently unfair to private sector employees. He generally downplays the fact that we contribute our earnings to this system, and seems to completely overlook that teachers are taxpayers who contribute to all public sector programs. Puente also deemphasizes the fact that the STRS has proposed reforms that will demand more money from teachers which will be especially difficult for teachers in districts like ours that have been forcing teachers, administrators and other employees to accept pay freezes. There are many excellent letters to the editor in response to Puente's analysis in the January 10th edition of the PD that provide more detail, also available at www.cleveland.com.

*Respectfully submitted,
Andi Glickman, chairperson*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Welcome back and Happy New Year! An ad was placed in the Dec/January issue of the Shaker Life Magazine acknowledging the National Merit Finalists from the Teachers' Association. We also placed ads with the Shakerite newspaper. In addition we received a thank you letter from the Woodbury African-American Female Scholars and advisors acknowledging our recent donation.

*Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ashbaugh, chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The SHTA Fall Happy Hour was a great way to end Fall and bring in Winter. Everyone had a great time. We ate appetizers, socialized, played games and sipped on cocktails. ☺ This year, we even gave away door prizes!!!! Here is a list of our Fall Happy Hour Winners:

SHTA Flash Drives

Sara Joyce –High School
Jason Bednar – Woodbury
Bill Scanlon – High School
Jewell Reid – High School
Gretchen Hess – Lomond
Angela Harrell – High School
Judy Wells – Woodbury
Bob Bognar – Woodbury
Nate Reese – Woodbury
Chante Thomas-Taylor – Woodbury

SHTA Fellowship Winner

Bill Scanlon – Woodbury

Garmin GPS System Winner

Bob Bognar - Woodbury

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

January 11, 2010

Shaker High School

The President, Becky Thomas, called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Michael Griffith, principal of Shaker Heights High School, welcomed the SHTA representative council.

The minutes of the November meeting were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell had no report

PTO REPORT: Stacey Reed, PTO Co-First Vice President, reported the PTO is working on teacher grants. The Annual fund is down and contributions are still appreciated. Feedback concerning the all district directory is welcomed.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

PRESIDENT

Becky Thomas spoke about the positive feedback the Association received in the *Sun Press* recently. She thanked Gary Raymont for his work in keeping the insurance rate increase low. She mentioned that the contract negotiating team will only receive a partial payment for the newly negotiated contract.

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dollye Finney was unable to attend the meeting, Becky Thomas submitted her report. She encouraged staff members to contribute a donation to the Night for the Red & White. The SHTA's donation to the silent auction this year will be admission to both the Cleveland and Columbus Zoos with a Hotel gift package.

SECRETARY

Matt Zucca discussed the SHTA's Annual Red & White Drawing to be held on February 1. Ticket sales are for **SHTA MEMBERS ONLY** and will close on January 28. He stated that this year's prizes in the SHTA's Red and White drawing are three sets of two tickets to the event on March 13. You may win only once. A flyer will be published in the newsletter.

TREASURER

Bill Scanlon discussed our current financial report. He stated that documents have been sent to the accountants for the Association's audit. The SHTA's Investment Committee will meet on February 23.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Stacy Elgart said we currently have 424 members.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Gary Raymont said that we will continue to pay 8% of the insurance premium. Mr. Raymont reminds members of the importance of understanding time off from work and the FMLA. If you have questions please call him with any questions at x4259.

A letter has been sent to the administration regarding an association member and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Ashbaugh stated that we will have an ad in the *Shaker Life Magazine* and *The Shakerite*. She read a thank you letter from the Woodbury Scholars program thanking the Association for our contribution and support.

PUBLICATIONS

John Morris said that newsletter submissions are due on Wednesday. Please send them to him at morris_j@shaker.org. The newsletter will be e-mailed on Tuesday.

SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison reported that our social at Jillian's was successful. She is planning the recognition reception which will be held in May and possibly a spring social event.

SALARY/TENURE

Becky Thomas had no report.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Steven Smith will be sending non-tenured teachers reminders of the next upcoming evaluation.

LEGAL AID

Mike Sears had no report.

LEGISLATIVE

Andi Glickman stated that her report in this month's newsletter will discuss the recent *Plain Dealer* article.

POLICY

Dave Klapholz had no report.

BUILDING REPORTS

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

Lomond expressed thanks to the custodial staff for their efforts with the snow removal these past weeks.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Becky thanked the High School reps for hosting our meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2010
AT SHAKER HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca, secretary

Editorial: A Proposal Reconsidered

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.

Two years ago, in these editorial pages, I suggested that our school district consider offering reduced-cost tuition to those teachers who lived out of district and had children they would like to bring to our schools. The proposal elicited letters to the editor that supported and challenged the idea. After two years and a survey that indicated that this issue was not a major negotiating concern for those who responded to the survey, I thought I would put the issue to bed. A conversation I had this week changed my mind.

I had dinner with a Shaker resident who has a pre-school age child that is attending a private school in the district. This resident's wife works at the same school and receives a 50% reduction in their children's pre-K to 12 tuition. The thought then occurred to me. Why can't Shaker offer public school teachers the same benefit that private school teachers in our community receive, especially when schools in adjacent district such as Orange allow out of district teachers' children to attend without cost?

In my 2008 editorial I discussed the fact that I lived out of district and had inquired about the district's policy on allowing out of district teachers' to bring their children to Shaker Schools. I found out that tuition would be over \$12,000 a year. Tuition and the policy have not changed, but my circumstances have. I am now a proud resident of Shaker Heights with all the privileges of sending my children to the outstanding schools in the district. However, my perspective has not changed. In fact, I have become even more certain that we should adopt a policy that allows teachers who live out of district to bring their children to Shaker Schools with reduced tuition.

The reasons I cited two years ago have not changed. I believe that teachers who have children in the district have increased motivation to try and make the district the best that it can be. Likewise, I believe that the students these teachers bring to the schools have the kind of involved parents and co-operative spirit we value. I still believe that we need to be creative in the benefits we can offer new teachers who are considering teaching in our district and present teachers who are looking to stay and grow. This proposal could prove to be a powerful incentive to both groups.

What has changed in the two years since I made this proposal? The housing market and financial environment have taken a turn for the worse. I was fortunate to find a house in the district and sell my own, but I know many teachers who have been far less fortunate. The reality of being stuck in a house due to a market with no clear upswing does not bode well for movement into the district for many of our out-of-district teachers with school age children. Hand in hand with the housing market, the very real stagnation of our economy, as exhibited by our recent wage freeze, makes buying a house in the district that much more difficult. In fact, I know colleagues who are opting to send their children to private schools because they are not happy with the schools in their present district but cannot sell their own house, let alone finance another, in our district.

I know that many of the argument against this proposal have not changed. What does this proposal offer to teachers who do not have school-age children? How do we offset potential increased class sizes and costs? What do we say to teachers and community members who have made the financial sacrifices to live in the district? I would argue that the potential overall benefits to our community and our schools far outweigh the concerns that these questions represent.

I believe that we, as an Association, have the power to make this proposal without it becoming a bargaining issue. I believe it would benefit teachers, the administration and the community. It is up to us, as teachers, to make our voices heard if we want this to happen. As I did two years ago, I invite readers of this newsletter to present reasons for and against this proposal in the newsletters that follow. Please submit your thoughts on this proposal to morris_j@shaker.org. JM

Important Dates

Fri. Jan. 22

- Professional Day Grades 7-12 – No School

Mon. Feb. 1

- Executive Board - Woodbury

Mon. Feb. 8

- Representative Council – Middle School

Mon. Feb. 9

- Board of Education Meeting - Boulevard

Fri. Feb. 12th thru Mon. Feb. 15th

- Parents' Weekend Holiday – No School

Mon. March 1

- Executive Board – Woodbury

Mon. March 5

- Professional Day Grades K to 6 – No School

Mon. March 8

- Representative Council - Mercer

Tues. March 9

- Board of Education Meeting - Boulevard

Sat. March 13

- A Night for the Red and White at Landerhaven

Fri. March 19

- Conference Day Grades K to 8

Fri. March 26

- 4:00 p.m. Spring Recess Begins