

SHTA *news*

No. 1 • 19 September 2011

Message From the President

Welcome back, everyone! We are in the thick of September and things are as busy as ever. I hope you have had a positive beginning of your 2011-2012 school year. I am honored to begin my first year as president of the SHTA and continue my work with all of you. As is customary in my role, I toured the buildings before school began. I found that the custodial staff, ground crews, food service and clerical teams were all working diligently throughout the District. I know that many of you came into the schools throughout the summer to work on International Baccalaureate and other initiatives. The result is that our District is moving successfully into these new programs.

Since assuming the presidency on July 1st, I have worked on several issues that concern our Association. I clarified contract issues with individual members and within buildings. I worked with the NEOEA Union Summit and continued to support our PAC of SHTA and their efforts to help repeal SB5. Past President Becky Thomas has been instrumental in helping me transition into my new position. Dr. Thomas will remain on our Executive Board. During the summer, I also met with the officers and the chairperson of PR&R for planning and welcomed our new teachers to Shaker Heights.

If it has not been obvious enough, one of my primary focuses as president thus far has been to help repeal SB5, primarily through working with our PAC and We Are Ohio. Eileen Sweeney, our PAC chairperson, and John Sweeney, PAC assistant treasurer with Bill Scanlon, have been key figures in our efforts as an Association. We have co-sponsored, with the Cleveland Teachers' Union, a successful Educators' Bash to benefit We Are Ohio's repeal efforts. We have sold buttons and t-shirts to encourage our solidarity with the police, firefighters, nurses and other public workers facing SB5. On August 25th, we held a press conference that resulted in a September 9th Sun Press article that expressed our position on the potentially damaging effects of SB5*. I cannot think of a more significant issue facing teachers during my career than the one facing us now in our efforts to encourage our community and the public at large to Vote No on Issue 2 in November. You will probably see this opinion confirmed in many of the reports in this issue. I cannot encourage you strongly enough to make donations of both money and time to both the We Are Ohio campaign and our own PAC of SHTA.

Please consult our online contract at shtaweb.org. Right now, we are waiting for hard copies to be distributed. Please contact your representatives if you have specific contract questions. I encourage you to "friend" us on Facebook. We are listed as "Shaker Heights Teachers' Association." I also encourage you to "friend" our "PAC of Shaker Heights Teachers' Association" as well. As always, you are welcome to attend

any meeting of the Representative Council. Our meetings are listed both in the Shaker PTO calendar and our web site.

Working with the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association has been one of the defining elements of my teaching career. It is with a great sense of honor and responsibility that I take on the role of president. I look forward to working with all of you this year in defeating SB5 and in our everyday lives as extraordinary Shaker Heights educators.

*http://www.cleveland.com/shaker-heights/index.ssf/2011/09/shaker_heights_teachers_want_s.html

*Respectfully submitted,
John Morris, president*

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome back to the 2011-12 school year to returning SHTA members staff- and a warm welcome to our new colleagues. I hope that you all had a safe and restful summer and that your year is off to a great start. Over the summer, it was my pleasure to meet with the officers to plan, debrief and discuss the Association's agenda. It is an honor to serve with this team of officers. They are committed and well informed to the membership of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I welcome the new leadership of Dr. John Morris and appreciate the experience and expertise offered by our immediate past-president Dr. Rebecca Thomas. We look forward to supporting our new leadership through these tempestuous transitions in this atmosphere for collective bargaining. It is important that we continue to represent the professionalism and solidarity that has historically been the backbone of the SHTA.

I would like to remind SHTA Fellowship recipients that your receipts for reimbursement are due at the end of the month. Please forward this information to me at Boulevard School. Please allow me 2- 3 weeks from the time of your request to receive your check. A number of Fellows have not yet submitted your receipts. I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity.

I attend the PTO Council meetings on behalf of the Association. These meetings are held approximately bi- monthly and appear on your PTO calendar. The Council, at no charge, annually provides each teacher with the PTO calendar. All teachers and parents are automatically members of this organization. However, we ask that you donate to the annual PTO drive (A contribution sheet is available at the back of the newsletter).

I am wishing you a safe and happy school year and I am looking forward to working with the new administration of the Association and the Building Representatives. If you have any questions for me feel free to contact me at 295-4916.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dollye Finney, vice president*

TREASURER'S REPORT

Welcome back to a new school year. This past summer members of our Association were busy fighting SB5, which will be Issue 2 on November's ballot. There is a lot of information out in the media about this issue. Please stay informed and keep spreading the word about the importance of November's vote.

In May the members of our Association approved the budget we are currently operating under. The financial report is included here.

Payroll withdrawal for dues (\$20 per pay), for those who choose that option of payment, will begin with the October 15th paycheck. Anyone who prefers to pay her/his \$200 dues all at once can send a check to Stacy Elgart at the Middle School.

The Investments Committee will be meeting next month with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, to discuss our investments and whether any changes need to be made.

Any member of the Association who makes copies for SHTA business should email me the number of copies made. I keep a running tally in order to pay the District for the paper used.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

FINANCIAL REPORT

	7/1/10	9/15/11
COMPOSITE BALANCE		
Balance 7/1/10		844,407.77
Receipts 7/1/10 to present		6.69
Change in Valuation 7/1/10 to present		<u>-28,821.38</u>
		815,593.08
Expenditures 7/1/10 to present		-4,862.07
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2009-2010		<u>-2,687.50</u>
TOTAL		808,043.51
BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS		
A. KEY BANK (9/11/11)		
Certificates of deposit		
29 mo. @ 1.15%-Matures on 9/6/13		<u>20,928.62</u>
Total Certificates of deposit		20,928.62
Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY)		42,717.07
Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
		63,645.69
Less outstanding checks		<u>-5,440.68</u>
TOTAL KEY BANK		58,205.01
B. EDWARD JONES (8/26/11)		
Regular Association Account	391,818.29	
Advisory Solutions Account	<u>358,020.21</u>	
TOTAL		<u>749,838.50</u>
		808,043.51

Budgeted Accounts

<u>Account</u>	7/1/11		Transfers		9/15/11	
	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>out</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Transfers in</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Accounting	3500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	9302.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,302.00
Vice President	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Secretary	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Treasurer	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
P.R. & R. Chairperson	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Editor	4653.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,653.00
Building reps. and alternates	10000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Conferences and meetings	2500.00	336.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,163.63
Contingency	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250.00
Fellowships and Grants	4000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00
Legal	5000.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,950.00
Negotiations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Executive Board expenses	500.00	24.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	475.64
Officers' expenses	500.00	76.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	423.66
Payroll taxes	550.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	550.00
Publications	1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Public Relations	7000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00
Social	2500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	5100.00	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5,100.00</u>
TOTAL	83679.00	4,862.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	78,816.93

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Welcome back to our senior staff and welcome to our newest members. While I hope everyone had a restful and healthy summer break, by now I'm sure we're starting to feel like we never left.

My name is Mike Sears and I teach 7th grade World History at the Middle School. This is my 13th year in the district and my 16th year in education. This is my 7th year of involvement with SHTA, and my 2nd year as the chairperson for Professional Rights and Responsibilities. This position is also called Grievance Chair. I spent two years shadowing Gary Raymont, who retired in June, 2010 and remains only a phone call away. My extension is 4770 and e-mail (sears_m@shaker.org) is also a great way to contact me.

One important fact about our current salary freeze is that the paycheck you received on September 16th should be exactly the same as the one from September 1st. The only way to increase your income this year is if you move horizontally on the salary schedule in November or April by reaching continuing education levels like B.A. + 15 or M.A. + 30.

As many of you know, several changes to our health insurance plans will take effect on January 1, 2012. The district's Insurance Committee is meeting on September 21st to start discussing how to get information about these changes out to the membership. In addition, the committee will be looking at how to start offering a flexible spending plan for employees. This plan will be optional, but is designed to save employees money on their federal income tax. As we continue to pay more for health care and child care costs, we can set aside money to pay for these expenses. This money is exempt from federal income tax. The challenge for employees who choose to participate is to decide how much money to put into their account. If the money is not used by the end of the calendar year, it is lost. Much more information on this new program will be available later this fall.

Walgreens pharmacy customers recently received a letter stating that they will not be able to fill their prescriptions after December 31, 2011. Express Scripts is our prescription drug provider. Walgreens and Express Scripts are in the middle of a tough negotiation about their 2012 service agreement. It is possible that they will not reach an agreement. Unfortunately, there is not much we can do to prevent this. Representatives from Express Scripts will be at our Insurance Committee meeting on the 21st, and this topic will be discussed. If you are a Walgreens customer, please look for information in the October newsletter updating you on this developing situation.

The district policy for maternity leave is clearly outlined in the contract. However, new mothers have to decide how many sick days they want to use and if they want to take any unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act. If you are pregnant, please contact me right away so we can look at a calendar, and I can assist you in a plan that works best for you and your family. You should be aware that notes from doctors do not always allow for additional sick days to care for babies. For example, a note that discusses "failure to thrive" is an acceptable medical reason to use a sick day, but a note that mentions "bonding with the baby" will not be approved because that is not considered a medical condition that allows for a sick day.

Paternity leave is mentioned in our new contract. New fathers are permitted to use up to 10 sick days to help care for a new baby. No documentation from doctors is required for this leave. For both maternity and paternity leave, contact me before you contact the administration so you understand all of your rights.

It is your responsibility to keep the Personnel Department informed of changes in your family status (over the summer as well as during the school year) concerning **births, adoptions, deaths, divorce, marriage, or entry into military service**. If these changes are not reported to the Benefits Office within **30 days** you will not be permitted to make this change until the next open enrollment, which is usually in November. **Please contact Sue Garber at 4318 before the 30 day deadline. This may cost you money if you miss this deadline.**

Personal days are personal. No one needs to know why you are taking a personal day. You do **not** need to fill out a form about a personal day. You may simply enter it on AESOP. However, you are responsible for keeping track of your own personal days. If you enter a 4th or a 5th personal day, you will **NOT** be paid for those absences. You may not use personal days before or after a holiday unless you fill out the personal day request form and it is approved by both the building principal and the Personnel

Administrator, Lisa Howell. Each case is handled on an individual basis. If you have a question about this, please contact me.

If you use more than 5 sick days in a row, a building secretary will have to enter days 6 and up into AESOP. The Personnel Department reserves the right to ask you for a doctor's note explaining your absence beyond one week. If you use 10 sick days in a row, the Personnel Department is required by law to send you a form about Family and Medical Leave. You may choose to continue using sick days with appropriate documentation or you may go on an extended and unpaid leave for family or medical reasons. Please call me if you foresee a situation like this one happening.

The current contract is available on our web site, <http://shtaweb.org>. I strongly encourage you to read it and use it as a reference. I'm also happy to help you with issues of interpretation and clarification.

Finally, I strongly encourage you to do everything you possibly can to make Issue 2 (Senate Bill 5) is defeated on November 8th. Donate money to We Are Ohio. Get a Yard Sign. Talk to your neighbors. Talk to your family and friends. Volunteer at the We Are Ohio phone bank at Shaker Square. Drive voters to the polls on Election Day. Help people you know understand the basic issue of this campaign: to save collective bargaining. Without it, our students suffer and so do we. Without it, teaching is no longer a professional career. The early television ads from the pro-Issue 2 campaign are designed to confuse voters. It looks like they are not even making an argument for their side. Instead, they are saying things about how Issue 2 helps teachers and firefighters. It is up to each of us to explain this issue to voters and clear up the confusion. Vote NO on Issue 2!

*Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson*

SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

I will also serve as chair of the Salary/Tenure Committee. Since we are in a non-negotiations year, I will update you on issues relating to this committee as they arise.

*Respectfully submitted,
John Morris, chairperson*

TEACHER EDUCATION

Every year I am amazed at the talent and background of the teachers that are hired into our district. Shaker is known as one of the best school districts in the country, and we continue to attract top teacher candidates.

At this month's meeting for new teachers and their mentors, I'll highlight some contract language that will especially affect them. I'll also give new teachers a list of important dates they have to keep in mind as they progress through the year.

Also, non-tenured teachers have some important dates to keep in mind:

- Salary Reclassification – Coursework must be completed by the **November and April Board Meetings**. Requests must be submitted in time for the November and April meeting.
- Tuition Fund – Deadline for applications is **December 1st**.

- Evaluations – December evaluations and March Evaluations
- Evaluations must be sent to the Personnel Office no later than 7 days prior to the April Board of Education Meeting.

Please remember that my role with the Association is not just to assist new teachers and their mentors. I am also available to any **non-tenured teacher** who may have any questions or concerns. Please contact me to discuss any aspect of the evaluation process or any other area of your employment in Shaker Heights City Schools as you move towards tenure within our district. I can be reached through the district e-mail (smith_st@shaker.org) or at Lomond (295-6385).

*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Smith, chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Legislative Report: Issue 2

Welcome back to a new year! Summer and all of the frenzy of opening a new academic year have made it too easy to forget what is going on politically with regards to our profession. The referendum vote on SB 5, now Issue 2, is looming ever closer. Political ads have already begun, and while our first instinct may be to tune them out, it is now more important than ever to be informed, to inform others, and to VOTE.

I, along with others among our members, wrote at length throughout last spring about what this legislation means to our profession. If passed, Issue 2 would abolish the salary scale as we know it, and would severely limit our ability to negotiate salary or working conditions. In addition, we would see job security threatened by a doing away with seniority as we know it. We would all see notable increases in our (already rising) contributions to healthcare and pensions, and would be put at the mercy of an as yet undefined merit-based pay plan. Not only does Issue 2 target our profession, but that of police, firefighters, nurses, and all public employees. It could potentially change the working conditions of a huge and essential portion of the middle class.

Issue 2 supporters, united under the name *Building a Better Ohio*, are launching a campaign assuring tax-payers that these changes are in their best interests. They are arguing that the law would actually keep the best teachers in the classroom, and that merit pay would inspire excellence. What Issue 2 says to me about my profession, along with that of firefighters, police, nurses, etc., is that despite our necessary presence in a functioning society, we are incapable of deciding how we best work, and undeserving of the right to have any serious say in our compensation.

I implore you to be as informed as possible on this and any legislation that would impact our profession. Know the issues, study the opposition, and be willing and prepared to share your knowledge with those who do not know what being an educator really entails, or understand exactly what is at stake in November. I am providing a list of websites of interest. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the PAC if you have questions about Issue 2.

On a more positive note, on September 8, President Obama unveiled his American Jobs Act, and promises that some of the \$30 billion would go toward fixing

and modernizing schools in disrepair, and in restoring teachers whose jobs were lost due to budget cuts. I will report on those details as they come available.

In closing, I encourage you to read Charles M. Blow's September 2 *New York Times* column entitled *In Honor of Teachers* (<http://www.nytimes.com>). It will make you feel better, I promise.

Websites of Interest:

*The Ohio Ballot Board (includes the full text and summary of Issue 2, as well as official statements of support and opposition)

www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/IssueProcBallotBd/BallotBoard.aspx

*We are Ohio (opposition to Issue 2) www.weareohio.com

*Stand Up for Ohio (opposition to Issue 2, workers' rights) <http://standupforohio.org>

*Building A Better Ohio (support for Issue 2) <http://betterohio.org/>

*The PAC (Political Action Committee) of the SHTA is on Facebook. Please join us!

*Respectfully submitted,
Anna Hruby chairperson*

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

Welcome back. I hope you are having an outstanding start to this school year. The role of the legal aid committee is to hear **requests from** members who might need legal assistance. I can be reached at **295-5601** if you have any questions.

*Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas-Taylor, Chairperson*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Welcome back to everyone. I am looking forward to serving the SHTA and its members again as public relations chairperson. My responsibilities include placing ads in various publications such as Shaker Life Magazine (We recently had an ad in the August issue), the Shakerite and the Gristmill. I also am responsible for making donations to various organizations that help to enrich the lives of our Shaker students. In addition I purchase teacher appreciation gifts for our members that are given out during teacher appreciation week. As stated in the SHTA Constitution and By-Laws, I will continue to work at fostering mutual understanding, good will and respect between and among students, staff, community and administration.

*Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Musca (Ashbaugh),
chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The membership deadline this year is FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 2011. If you pay your dues by check, please submit your check for \$200 to your building representative. If you pay by payroll deduction, SHTA dues will automatically begin with the October 16th paycheck (\$20 per pay). Membership forms only need to be completed by NEW

MEMBERS, or as a current member you wish to CHANGE your form of payment and SIGN UP FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTION. If you wish to stop payroll deduction and instead pay by check, please submit a letter requesting the change with your signature.

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

PAC OF SHTA

Over the past six months, teachers, firefighters, the police, and public employees have faced the largest threat to their livelihood. The climate in the statehouses across the country has been hostile against the middle class. These tough economic times, caused by the greedy policies of Wall Street and the banking industry, have created crises in most State budgets. Our Ohio governor, John Kasich, has decided to solve the problem by balancing the budget on the backs of the middle class. Senate Bill 5 was the first shot across the bow. This action was an overt act of union busting.

I hope most of the SHTA membership is aware of the potentially dire consequences of the elements held within SB 5. The Bill, now signed into law by John Kasich, will remove the Association's power to collectively bargain our contract, thus our work conditions. The effects have devastating realities to our colleagues and to the students we teach. The effort to repeal the law, headed up by We Are Ohio, has resulted in a referendum being placed on the ballot in November. The campaign to repeal the law, now called Issue 2, requires the collective efforts of every teacher, firefighter, police officer and public employee. We face an uphill battle to inform the public that a No vote on Senate Bill 5 is now a No on Issue 2. The change in name will cause great confusion for individuals at the ballot box. Helping the citizens of Ohio become informed on Issue 2 and encouraging a large turnout at the polls will be the main focus for the fall campaign.

The second shot across the bow was House Bill 194 (HB 194); the voter rights restricting bill. Contained within the bill are specifics that focus on modifications to the absentee balloting process. HB 194 shortens the voting period for regular absentee voting from 35 to 21 days. It prohibits in person voting on Sundays and Saturday afternoons within the 17 day window prior to the election. Most of all, it requires individuals who do not have proof of identification to cast a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot would only be counted if the individual could provide the proper identification within 10 days. These changes are intended to disenfranchise the economically disadvantaged. These changes are targeting a broad section of the Democratic base and it hopes to decrease the percent of Democrats able to vote in the November 2012 election.

Over the past several months, the PAC of the SHTA has attended rallies and town hall meetings in Columbus, Strongsville, Cleveland and other local communities. We have hosted our own rally at Our Lady of Peace Church in Cleveland. Our members have marched together in the Memorial Day and Labor Day parades. We have collected close to 4,000 signatures on the petition to Repeal Senate Bill 5. The PAC of SHTA is collaborating along with We Are Ohio, Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU), and all local unions to fight for Issue 2 to be on the ballot. The CTU and the PAC of the SHTA hosted the Educators Bash on August 26th to kickoff our fall campaign. Currently, we are

coordinating phone banking and canvassing events for the SHTA members to volunteer to work. We are coordinating efforts to circulate the House Bill 194 petition. We will be actively working all aspects of the fight to preserve our collective bargaining and election rights. I appeal to each and every member of the SHTA to contribute some action to help repeal Issue 5 by voting no on Issue 2 in November and put House Bill 194 on the referendum. It is critically important that we use our collective voices and efforts in order to forge a tomorrow that we can live and work in as our right. Like us on Facebook at the PAC of SHTA. You may contact the PAC directly via email at pacshed@gmail.com.

*Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Sweeney*

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Policy committee manages issues with the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Association. If there are concerns about the Constitution or By-Laws this year, you will see those concerns described in this part of the Newsletter. In the absence of issues, I will use this monthly space to highlight a part of the Constitution or By-Laws that might be helpful to you. If you have any questions about the Constitution and By-Laws, feel free to contact me.

Welcome back, and have a great school year.

*Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholz, chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Welcome Back!! I would like to try something new this year, please let me know what you think. Instead of planning a Fall Happy Hour, I would like to plan a Holiday Party for SHTA. This party would include dinner, dancing and fun. If you could email me your thoughts, it would be helpful. My email address is garrison_d@shaker.org. Looking forward to hearing from you.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

SECRETARY'S REPORT**MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

September 12, 2011

Woodbury School

The President, John Morris, called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

Erica Wigton, administrator at Woodbury School welcomed the SHTA Representative Council.

The minutes of the May 2011 meeting were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell, Personnel Administrator, was introduced to the rep council. She reported a smooth opening for the school year. She stated the Tenured Teacher evaluation notification has been sent out electronically and forms are on the districts website. She wished everyone a successful year.

PTO REPORT: Tracy Williams, PTO Council co-president, talked about changes to the grants from the PTO Council.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:**PRESIDENT**

John Morris reported he took office on July 1. He attended the NEOEA Union Summit working on the repeal of Senate Bill 5. He attended the Educators Bash co-sponsored by PAC of SHTA and Cleveland Teachers Union. He has worked on clarifying concerns about the contract day. Due to the fact that hard copies of the new contract are not yet available he reminded Building Reps. to contact him, Vice-President Dollye Finney, and Professional Rights and Responsibilities Chair Mike Sears if they have questions. He was pleased about the coverage Shaker Teachers received in the September 9 article in the Sun Press.

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dollye Finney will be meeting with PTO Council throughout the school year. She encourages members to donate to the PTO's annual fund. She asked that teachers who make contributions should identify themselves as such. Ms. Finney commented on the excellent response from the Shaker teachers quoted in the September 9 Sun Press article.

SECRETARY

Matt Zucca explained the attendance procedure. He met with Executive board members during the summer and the new teachers.

TREASURER

Bill Scanlon discussed duties of the Treasurer. He discussed the current financial report and the 2011-2012 budget. He worked on the start up of the PAC of SHTA. He met with

the new teachers over the summer. He plans to meet with the Finance Committee in October.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

TEACHER EDUCATION

Steve Smith discussed his responsibilities. He stated that he recently met with new teachers and will be attending the new teachers' mentoring meeting later this month.

MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Stacy Elgart discussed the membership drive. She outlined the procedure for paying Association dues. She passed out membership information to all the head building reps. She stated that membership is currently at 401.

POLICY

Dave Klapholz had no report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Musca (Ashbaugh) gave a brief overview of her responsibilities. She stated the Association had an ad in the August issue of *Shaker Life Magazine*. She is working on a year long ad in the Shakerite. She encouraged ideas to be sent to her for Teacher Appreciation Gifts.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Anna Hruby was unable to attend the meeting. Her report will appear in the newsletter.

PUBLICATIONS

Andrew Glasier was unable to attend the meeting. John Morris reported on his behalf. He requested that articles be submitted to Andrew by midnight of the Wednesday following rep council meetings at glasier_a@shaker.org.

LEGAL AID

Chante Thomas-Taylor had no report.

SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison discussed a possibility of a winter holiday party.

SALARY/TENURE

John Morris had no report.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mike Sears stated that he recently met with new teachers. He discussed the importance of members communicating with the Association's representatives and board members about problems and questions they may have. He asked that any member, male or female, who is expecting a baby contact him to discuss any days they may need to take off from work.

BUILDING REPORTS

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

Boulevard commented on how well the building looked for the start of the school year.

Fernway stated the building looked great and they had a smooth start.

Mercer had concerns about the number and the length of staff meetings being held at the school.

Woodbury had concerns about afterschool coverage for students after the contract day.

The High School had concerns about parking tickets being issued to staff members and not to students. There was also a concern about how a new law will affect teachers who volunteer to be a co-operating teacher for student teachers. The high school also had a concern that Walk-Throughs would be used as an evaluation of a teacher.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

John Sweeney spoke on behalf of the PAC of SHTA. He encouraged donations be made to assist in the repeal of SB 5.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

John thanked the Woodbury representatives for hosting our meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2011 AT
FERNWAY SCHOOL.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Zucca, secretary

Momma, Don't Let Your Children Grow Up to Be Teachers

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.

When I tell people that I'm a high school social studies teacher, people often respond, "I couldn't do your job. How do you work with those kids?" I always tell them, it's not the students that give me headaches, it's the adults I have to deal with; administrators, parents, and ESPECIALLY politicians make my job more and more difficult. Twelve years ago, when I started in this profession, it was much different. There was more local control, greater flexibility in curriculum and more time for teachers to collaborate and work with students. Class sizes were relatively small and thinking outside the box was generally encouraged. Since then, we have seen an avalanche of testing, paper work, less staff because of budget cuts and the worst part, every commentator from Bill Gates to President Obama feel they understand educating children better than teachers. Teachers have become the whipping boys/girls of politicians and editorialists alike. Which is why when my students ask me about their future, I tell them to think about becoming an auto mechanic, plumber or electrician; you'll always have a job, you'll make enough money to feel comfortable and people are less likely to tell you how to do your job.

Not that there were not problems in public education twelve years ago. The issues of the achievement gap and problems with dealing with students of poverty led many discussions in meetings throughout the district and beyond. With the passage of *No Child Left Behind* in 2001, the discussion was taken out of teachers' hands, however. Now all our worth as educators was dwindled down to test scores and attendance rates. There were no incentives to do better other than the punishment of both the federal and state governments would come if we did not. The goal was perfection for every student of every group; special education, minorities, socio-economic class, etc... The more diversity in your school district, the more you had to accomplish, therefore punishing diversity. The funding for these mandates never came, costing residents of the district money for giving state and federally mandated tests every year. And once a year, the education stops at our high schools as we administer the Ohio Graduation Test to tenth graders (yes, I know they have two more years of school to graduate), in March (yes, I know the class is not over but I must teach the entire course by the test date), which takes an enormous amount of collective planning to make sure we do not break any of the state's testing procedures.

What information do we and do we not get from these tests? While I cannot speak for the other grade level testing that starts at second grade, I know that the social studies test focuses on basic amendments, industrial revolution, protest movements, and other historical and social studies skills. What it does not show is how certain students perform poorly on tests but creatively express their knowledge. It does not test students'

love of a subject or how students interact with others and work in groups. It doesn't speak to students evolving maturity, who sometimes do not realize what they have learned from their teachers until years later (How many of you have said "I wish I paid more attention in so-in-so's class...") Once I had my most difficult and most complex student return two years after dropping out of high school to thank me for what I tried to do for him and to tell me he has a job and is returning to his education. These interactions will never show up on tests but they are an important part of educating our future.

With these common assessments comes common curriculum. Now almost every high school in the state has moved their United States history courses to the tenth grade as the state "recommended" to better teaching the curriculum on the test. Gone are the freedoms of local districts to focus on local issues as we all have to reach the goals of the Ohio Graduation Test. This is just the beginning of the mechanization of my profession. Gone are the goals of creative teaching which I believe helped our country soar to the top. We must rush to the test and in lock-step with others. While many say the material on the test does not stop teachers from teaching the topics in a creative manner, the pacing we must adhere to actually limits the depth we can focus on material. My first year of teaching United States history to eleventh graders, during the days of the Proficiency tests, my students in one class wanted to spend more time examining Native American displacement during the end of the 19th Century. I spent countless hours talking to other teachers and librarians, gathering materials and ideas to expand, in what I thought, was going to be a short unit. The students explored primary sources, we engaged in experiential learning, and students showed their knowledge through creating items that explored the themes. The next year I was asked to teach an American Government class and haven't used the material since because of the state curriculum. These common assessments show us how students are doing as compared to other students on tests. What they do not allow is teacher and student creativity, teacher's strengths and learning for fun.

By far the greatest threat to public education and my profession are over reaching politicians. They blame teachers' unions for all the ills while creating more and more unfunded mandates. They create a pile of paperwork that must be filled out that takes us away from teaching and planning. The federal government provides funding but is only taken away by the state government. They change the rules of our retirement after they have collected my check for my licensure; which I must now update every six years and pay for college tuition to stay accredited.

Not every teacher is perfect. Some are better than others. This has been true since the dawn of time. But teachers need the time and commitment to help steer the profession, not non-teachers.

Special Thanks to Waylon & Willie for the concept.*AG*

Tentative 2011-2012 Submission and Distribution Schedule for SHTA Newsletter

The following represents the tentative submission and distribution schedule for the SHTA Newsletter. Submissions include officer's reports as well as letters to the editor.

Wed., Sept. 14th – Submissions due

Mon., Sept. 19th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., Oct. 12th – Submissions due

Mon., Oct. 17th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., Nov. 9th – Submissions due

Mon., Nov. 14th – Newsletter distributed

Typically, there is no December Newsletter unless there is urgent business.

Wed., Dec. 14th – Submissions due

Mon., Dec. 19th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., Jan. 11th – Submissions due

Tues., Jan. 17th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., Feb 15th – Submissions due

Tues., Feb. 21th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., March 14th – Submissions Due

Mon., March. 19th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., April 11th – Submissions Due

Mon., April 16th – Newsletter distributed

Wed., May 16th – Submissions Due

Mon., May. 21th – Newsletter distributed

Submission Requirements

1. Letters to the editor are to be no longer than 500 words in length.
2. They need to include the signature of the author (to be published alongside the letter).
3. The author of the letter will be responsible for the spelling and grammar in the letter. The letters will not be edited after they are submitted.
4. The language and subject matter needs to be appropriate to a public document that represents our Association. The editorial board reserves the right to refuse publication of letters we deem inappropriate. We will ask the author to revise and resubmit.
5. Any letters to the editor not submitted on time will not be published in the newsletter.
6. Type all entries in Microsoft Word.
7. Type in "Times New Roman" size 10-12 font.
8. No headers or footers.
9. Do not worry about titles, unless you would like one for your letter to the editor.
10. One space between each sentence, instead of two.
11. Indent paragraphs with "tab" key only once.
12. No spaces between paragraphs.
13. Write lists in sentence form with commas in between items.
14. Spell check and grammar check (please). Please double-check the spelling of names as well.
15. Email submission as a file attachment, not typed in the text of the email. Please email me if you need help with this.

Following these suggestions will allow me to edit your submission most efficiently. I appreciate your effort in following them. AG

Important Dates

Thursday, September 29	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i> —Schools closed
Monday, October 3	SHTA Executive Board—Woodbury
Wednesday, October 5	screening of <i>American Teacher</i> (see below)
Monday, October 10	SHTA Representative Council—Fernway
Tuesday, October 11	Board of Education Meeting—Fernway 8 p.m.
Monday, October 31	SHTA Executive Board—Woodbury
Monday, November 7	SHTA Representative Council—Boulevard

Tuesday, November 8	Professional Day/Election Day—No Classes
Wednesday, November 9	Board of Education Meeting—Woodbury 8 p.m.
Friday, November 11	Conference Day, No Classes K-12
Monday, November 14	Conference Day, No Classes, K-8
Tuesday, November 22	Thanksgiving Recess begins at 4 p.m.
Monday, November 28	Return from Thanksgiving Recess

The Teachers Salary Project and The Civic Commons
present the screening of

AMERICAN TEACHER

A definitive look at the state of teaching in America
that offers a solution to the education crisis.

Narrated by Matt Damon

Community Screening and panel conversation

October 5, 2011, 7 p.m. at The Capitol Theater

1390 West 65th Street, Cleveland

Tickets: <http://americanteacherincleveland.eventbrite.com>

More information: <http://americanteachermovie.org>

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