

CONNECTIONS

WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council

President's Message: Then and Now

"Then and Now," the cover story in the most recent issue of *NEA Today*, highlights some of the major differences nationally between schools today and those of several decades ago. It got me thinking. How have things changed in our schools?

It wasn't all that long ago when Washington teachers' salaries were among the top ten in the nation. Now we are dead last among west coast states.

It wasn't all that long ago --- before the state salary allocation model, legislation to limit local levies, and state mandated testing --- when teachers in our area were among the highest paid in the nation with some of the lowest class sizes, and innovative, creative academic programs for diverse learners. And we could afford homes near the schools where we worked.

And while few of us really want to go back to the good old days of a handful of computers per building, slow-as-molasses copy machines (one side only, no stapling, hole punching, or collating), and huge gaps between property rich and property poor districts, neither do we have to settle for the shortcomings of today's funding system.

That's why members of the WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council are ready to Take the Lead and build support for changing the funding system for schools in this state. Local presidents and leaders from every local met for two days this summer to chart the course for Sammamish in this endeavor.

Soon they'll be coming to ask you to volunteer to

doorbell or attend public hearings, to write your legislator or talk to community groups about the funding issues. Be ready to say "yes" and help us restore the state's commitment to our schools.



It isn't going to be quick or easy. We're prepared for a multi-year campaign to build the groundswell of support this effort will take.

When I read *NEA Today* I was reminded of how very far we have come. The first year I started teaching I couldn't wear pants to school, pregnant teachers had to leave the classroom before they "showed," there were no special education programs, and most student research was done from out-of-date tomes in the school library. We've come a long way!

The progress we have made convinces me that working together we can make the lives for our colleagues and for our students even better.



Mary Lindquist—Council President

SAMMAMISH SUMMER

Many local members attended the NEA Convention from June 30-July 5 in Orlando, FL. Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly discussed and debated many important items on the agenda such as strategies for dealing with “No Child Left Behind,” our national health care crisis, IDEA, and indoor air quality in our public schools. Our delegates were: BEA—**Carl Clausen, Michele Gaynor, Tessa Heady, Michele Miller**; IEA—**Doug Jones, Neva Luke, Donna Manion, Paula Weiss**; LWEA—**Mike Blodgett, Ken Egawa, Faye Haas, Sandy Hargraves, Kay Knox, Toni Mickus, Ila Morrow, Jill Van Glubt, Jan Vunak, Marilyn Young**; State Delegates—**Laurie Harrison, Stephen Miller, Sheila Nokes, Peggy Solum**; NEA Board of Directors—**Kevin Teeley**.

professional development and leadership training, followed by the *Take the Lead* Institute which focused on the creation of a plan for councils to put together their *Take the Lead* campaigns. WEALA participants included: BEA—**Jon Kallay, Stephen Miller, RJ Sammons**; IEA—**Gary Arthur, Neva Luke, Phyllis Runyon**; LWEA—**Laurie Harrison, Bob Jameyson, Carla Pitts, Andrew Rabirotff, Sarah Van Alstyne, Jane Wartenbe, David Wobker**; LWESP—**Sheila Nokes**; MIEA—**Teri Lindquist, Mike Radow**; REA—**Perry Garrison, Pat Morrison**; SEA—**Nancy Byrnes, Charlene Gorringer, Lisa Radmer**; SVASA—**Cheri Enevold**; TEA—**Bev Bly-Addington, Amanda Cronin, James Main**. Take the Lead Committee members at the Institute: BEA—**Michele Miller**; LWEA—**Linda Stevens, Jane Wartenbe**; LWESP—**Bobbe Simpson**.

Early August found many of our members at the WEA Leadership Academy (WEALA) in Shoreline for

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Contract negotiations took up much of the spring and summer for several locals. Here are brief summaries:

- LWESP’s final settlement increased pay for all members; a portion surpassed their goal of making a living wage achievable which no one had reached previously. The bargaining team used the United Way’s definition of the \$19.08 per hour pay needed to afford a basic 2-bedroom apartment in King County.
- Bellevue EA members approved a two-year contract which raises the 2006-2007 salary level in the range of \$38,000 to over \$73,000. Highlights include quality medical insurance plans without additional out-of-pocket costs, improved personal leave provisions, and more paid time for work related to special education responsibilities. Details can be found at www.bellevueea.org.

COUNCIL NAME CHANGE

We have changed our name from Sammamish UniServ Council to WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council. Our new name along with a new logo highlight the interconnection between the Council and WEA. The look is different, but the commitment and dedication to our local associations and members remain the same.



WASHINGTON LEARNS

The initial report from the steering committee of Washington Learns, Governor Gregoire’s initiative to examine and improve our state’s education system, is due in early September. This will be followed by a series of public hearings across the state. The hearing in the Puget Sound area will be held on Thursday, September 14 at South Seattle Community College from 1-5 pm.

WEA is looking for the report to address concerns such as “What it really takes to educate students in today’s society versus the antiquated funding formulae of the 1980s.”

Washington Learns’ website is www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov.

WEA-SAMMAMISH

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