

SHTA *news*

No. 7 • 17 May 2010

Message from the President

Thank you. The approval vote by the community of Shaker Heights on Issue 12 reflects the high regard Shaker residents have for the schools and, as an extension, the work we do as teachers. Each of you played an important role in the success of the levy—through your financial contributions, your phone calls, your willingness to deliver yard signs and literature, and your commitment to providing the best education for the students in our schools. Again, thank you.

Each year, the Association president recognizes one member for his or her contribution to the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. This year's recipient of the President's Award is Dollye P. Finney. Dollye has been the Vice-President of the Association for the past decade. In that role, she represents the Association at PTO Council and serves as our liaison to the Night for the Red and White. She organizes and manages the educator grants. Dollye also serves on the Investments Committee and on the Legal Aid Committee. Many members contact Dollye with their questions and concerns; she is passionate in her commitment to the rights and responsibilities of each member. Her counsel is invaluable to me. Please plan to attend the District Recognition Reception on May 27th in the High School Cafeteria, 2nd floor. Dollye will receive her award at this time.

One of our most valued members of the Executive Board will also be recognized among the retirees at the District Reception. Gary Raymont has served the Association for over 30 years. He has been an advocate for our health benefits and for the contractual rights of all members. Many of us have our favorite stories to tell about Gary, especially relating to our members on maternity leave. Gary's dedication to our Association is exemplary. Please join me in sending your thanks and best wishes to Gary Raymont.

Also among the retirees will be George Harley, who received the President's Award last year. George has represented the high school for more than fifteen years and has been a resource for me about issues and concerns at the high school. Congratulations to George, Gary, and all the retirees.

Our web site **shtaweb.org** should be live as you receive this Newsletter. It is a work in progress as we add new information. Send me questions for the FAQ section along with other additions or changes. Please note: our constitution and by-laws are available on the web site as is our contract. Now each or you will have quick access to information about our Association.

I appreciate the efforts of each member of the Executive Board as well as my fellow officers-- Vice-President Dollye Finney, Secretary Matt Zucca, and Treasurer Bill Scanlon. This is an excellent team and I depend on them for assistance with the many issues and concerns of our members. I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to serve as your President.

End-of-the-Year Report

My 2010-2011 year actually began in July with the visit from President Barack Obama. I was given the opportunity to help contact teaching colleagues and distribute tickets to this event. It was exciting to listen to the President and see the enthusiasm of the audience. This was a great opportunity for all of us and a source of great pride for the Shaker Heights City Schools. Other “before school” activities included meeting with the officers and the chair of PR&R to plan for this year; greeting the newly hired teachers; and attending the opening Instructional and Administrative Council meeting. I also represented the Association at the Night for the Red and White and met periodically with the Superintendent. And I worked on the development of our website, which is now available—shtaweb.org.

The theme of meetings continued throughout the year as I attended all but one meeting of the Board of Education, went to the Imagine Shaker presentation, and met with the district Insurance Committee. I also responded to questions about the International Baccalaureate, the format of Chinese language instruction in the elementary buildings, and many other concerns.

Planning for negotiations was also time-consuming, concluding with the ratification of a one year contract. Our decision to do this was one of the key reasons that the Levy was successful Remember what I wrote in January—

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 [in the Sun Press], “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.

The end of the year has been consumed by working for the passage of the Levy. Along with the officers and Executive Board, I organized the SHTA Levy Fund and encouraged member contributions by offering to buy donuts for the school with the highest per member contribution. Boulevard Elementary School met this challenge and received their prize on Friday, May 14. Like many of you, I made phone calls and went door to door with literature. I really believe that the participation of so many teachers made a difference in the success of this levy.

I am looking forward to the 2010-2011 school year, which will be my last year as President of the Association and my last full year as a teacher in the Shaker Heights City Schools. I have said this before, and I will repeat it now—I feel fortunate to have spent my entire teaching career in the Shaker Heights schools. And I am grateful to all of you for allowing me to assist you as the President of the SHTA. Best wishes for a successful close of this school year and a safe and restful summer.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, president*

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

I hope that you enjoyed a safe and restful spring vacation. This month I have a very brief report.

The Night for The Red and White was held on March 13, 2010 at Landerhaven and it was a great success with 747 tickets sold 92 of which were staff tickets. The evening netted \$102,332 in support to the Shaker Heights City Schools. There were 20 sponsors and advertising sales were brisk. All of the items in the Silent Auction were sold and as always thank you so much for your contributions in making this evening a great success!

Thank you for your applications to the PTO for grants and the recipients will selected later this month. It is a pleasure to work with the current PTO Co Presidents Patty Kilroy and Eileen Mc Keon and the new PTO slate has been proposed. We are pleased to welcome the Co Presidents Stacey Reed and Karen Slovikovski for the 2010-2011 school year. The PTO Council slate is completed with the following:

1 st Vice Presidents	Ann Garson and Tracy Williams
Vice President Communications	Allison Smith
Vice President Educational Enrichment	Patty Kilroy and Eileen McKeon
Vice President of Financial Management	Bill Clawson
Vice President of Outreach	Tim & Marilou Myrick and Denise Smith
Vice President of Parent Ed & Advocacy	Tenee Yoder
Secretary	Beth Pollack
Treasurer	Cathy Kempton
Nominating	Marnee Anderson

Please join me in welcoming these volunteers to the PTO Council.

Please remind your fellowship recipients to submit receipts for reimbursement for professional development activities. The following members won the 2009-2010 Fellowships:

Boulevard School: Kelly Kunchik, Melissa Becerra and Tina McCauley

Fernway School: Mathew Zucca, Renata Griffin, Andree Hassell and Christina Cachat

Mercer School: Amy Hannah

Lomond School: Tanuata Devine and Naomi Loges

Onaway School: Saree Leimeieder, Martin Mc Guan, Bonnie Hoynacke, Jennifer Goulden and Noreen Smythe-Morrow

Woodbury School: Ruth Heide Mary Strouse, Lee Appel, Larry Miller and Deanna Clemente –Milne

Shaker Middle School: Linda Roth, Lillian Lichtman, Dawn Sullivan, Diane Smith, Beth Casey, Jane Troha, Cari Flox and William Moroney

Shaker Heights High School: Kenneth Culek, Alisha Warshay, Susan Weiner, James Schmidt, Renee Manuel, Travis Cox, Eillen Willis, Bernadette Thoennes, Andi Glickman, Nathanael Hsu and Laura Daberko.

As always I have truly enjoyed serving the Association. I fell blessed and honored to be a part of a professional organization represented the best educated staff in the Greater Cleveland area. You continue to set the standard of excellence that is at the heart of a world class school system. My sincere thanks to Becky Thomas for her tireless efforts on behalf of SHTA, Bill Scanlon continues to safeguard and oversee our finances with the greatest of care and welcome Matthew Zucca as he has served the Association well in his first term. I encourage you all to consider your part in serving the SHTA and thank you all again. Have a safe and restful summer.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dollye Finney, vice president*

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This will be my last newsletter report as Professional Rights and Responsibility Chair due to the fact that I will be retiring at the end of the school year. I have completed 35 years as an educator with the last 34 years in Shaker Heights.

I was hired in 1976 as a 5th grade teacher at Sussex School. In my very first year at Sussex, I knew right away that I wanted to be a member of the Shaker Height Teachers' Association. Once I was tenured I immediately signed up to be a building representative and I have been very active in our association ever since.

I was a building rep for a few years and then I was asked to be a member of the Executive Board for the Association. That has been almost 30 years ago. I have served our association in many capacities: building representative, elections chair, elected as Vice-President for over 10 years and most recently I have chaired my

present committee as PR & R. I am extremely proud to have been an active member of the SHTA. Because of the involvement of so many members, we have a very strong Association. As you know I appear to be the “go to” guy with insurances. I have enjoyed assisting our members when issues arose with healthcare and prescription drug questions. However, I will be most remembered in assisting our pregnant members with their maternity leave questions.

I feel I have had a great working situation with our administration these past 34 years. I have tried and have been very successful in resolving issues with our members /administration without filling many grievances.

In the past 34 years I have made lifelong friends through our Association. There are so many people I want to thank, so here goes - THANK YOU.

*Respectfully submitted,
Gary Raymont, chairperson*

TREASURER’S REPORT

Before the May Executive Board meeting I prepared a budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year. I presented that budget with zeros written in for salaries at the May Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board approved the budget for presentation to the Representative Council the following week. The Representative council discussed the budget and unanimously voted to maintain the officers’ and paid Committee heads’ salaries at the level they were for the 2009-10 fiscal year. The budget was then approved for placing on the May 17th ballot.

The budget you voted on this May was not a balanced budget. It never is in a year we have negotiations, because of the \$50,000 we put aside for the possible expense (legal fees and such) of the negotiation process. That being said, with our expenses in recent years growing, the budget is getting closer and closer to the limit of our dues income. A dues increase may need to be voted on in the near future.

At the Representative Council meeting on May 10th, three transfers were made, each for \$1000 dollars. These transfers were made to bring the Public Relations line item of the budget out of a negative value and into a positive value. We have spent more money this year on supporting community organizations than in the past, which necessitated the transfer of the funds. The current financial report is included.

Some of the activities I performed while fulfilling my duties as Treasurer this year are listed below:

- I attended every Executive Board Meeting and every Representative Council Meeting throughout the year.
- I maintained our insurance through Musgrave Insurance.
- I met with the Finance Committee and Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, twice this year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring to evaluate our Edward Jones investments and make changes that were deemed necessary.
- I met with the Finance Committee a number of other times throughout the year to discuss other options for our Association investments.
- I met with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co. to prepare the books for the audit of the 2008-09 fiscal year. I also met with them to complete the paperwork for our Form 990 tax filing.
- I managed our Certificates of Deposit, ensuring staggered maturity dates.
- I opened a new bank account titled “S.H.T.A. Levy Fund.” I collected the money sent in for that purpose, deposited it, and then wrote 3 large checks to the Committee for Shaker Schools in support of the May levy.
- I communicated with the Shaker Heights Board Office to pay the salaries of our six paid Officers and Committee Heads, along with the relevant STRS and Medicare payments.
- I paid the members of the Negotiations Committee a salary for their work negotiating our current contract.
- I paid the S.H.T.A. Representatives their compensation for attending the meetings throughout the year.
- I prepared the 2010-11 fiscal year budget for approval by the Representative Council at the May Association meeting.
- I paid bills throughout the year and balanced the checkbook, reimbursing any Association expenses incurred by our members.

- I kept accurate record of our finances throughout the year, maintaining a paper record of every transaction.
- I met with and discussed Association business with the other Officers and Executive Board members throughout the year when needed.

I enjoy the work I perform for the members of the Association. I get satisfaction out of being able to indirectly help each member in a small way. I thank you for giving me this opportunity. I hope everyone has had a nice year, and has an even better summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer

Budgeted Accounts						
	7/1/09					5/3/10
<u>Account</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>Transfers out</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Transfers in</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Accounting	5500.00	768.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4732.00
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	140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,860.00
Conferences and meetings	2500.00	2,072.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	427.41
Contingency	250.00	77.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	172.68
Fellowships and Grants	4000.00	340.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,660.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,915.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	85.00
Legal	5000.00	250.00	1000.00	0.00	0.00	3,750.00
Negotiations	50000.00	7,116.41	1000.00	0.00	0.00	41,883.59
Executive Board expenses	500.00	166.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	333.49
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	1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public Relations	5000.00	7654.28	0.00	0.00	3000.00	345.72
Social	2500.00	675.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,825.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	9000.00	<u>3,309.53</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5,690.47</u>
TOTAL	137929.00	45,992.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	97,936.25

FINANCIAL		REPORT	
	7/1/09	5/9/10	
COMPOSITE BALANCE			
Balance 7/1/09			719,244.67
Receipts 7/1/09 to present			84,840.00
Change in Valuation 7/1/09 to present			<u>120,732.94</u>
			924,817.61
Expenditures 7/1/09 to present			-45,992.75
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2008-2009			<u>-2,106.60</u>
TOTAL			876,718.26
BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS			
A. BUCKEYE STATE CREDIT UNION (BSCU) (4/30/10)			
Certificates of deposit			
	24 mo. @ 3.0% APY-Matures on 2/02/11	<u>43,399.72</u>	
	Total Certificates of deposit		43,399.72
	Savings accounts (0.50% APY)		101.30
	Share draft account (0.25% APY)		21,926.44
	Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
			65,427.46
	Less outstanding checks		<u>-0.00</u>
TOTAL BSCU			65,427.46
B. EDWARD JONES (4/30/10)			
	Regular Association Account	380,406.53	
	Advisory Solutions Account	<u>344,381.35</u>	
			724,787.88
C. KEY BANK (4/30/10)			
Certificates of deposit			
	29 mo. @ 2.15%-Matures on 9/6/11	20,519.57	
	15 mo. @ 1.9%-Matures on 10/17/10	<u>14,199.18</u>	
			34,718.75
	Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY)		53,493.04
	Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
			88,211.79
	Less outstanding checks		<u>-1,708.87</u>
TOTAL KEY BANK			86,502.92
TOTAL			876,718.26

SALARY-TENURE COMMITTEE

Using the information from the surveys in the spring of 2009, the negotiating team wrote proposals and met with the Superintendent and his team. This informal negotiation process allowed us to discuss issues rather than debate them. We focused on our common concerns and proposed a one-year contract with no change to the base salary or to the contributions for insurances. On November 23 the membership voted to accept this one-year agreement. The participation in the vote was significant (nearly 80%) and the approval vote was 87.28%.

The negotiating team is preparing a new survey to provide information for the negotiations that will reopen this fall. Please participate in this survey. Your insights are an important part of the process.

I would like to thank the members of the 2009-2010 negotiating team—Gary Raymont, Darlene Garrison, John Morris, Dave Klapholz, Linda Roth, and Mike Sears. And I would like to thank our membership for their strong support of the one-year agreement that was negotiated.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, chairperson*

POLICY COMMITTEE

For my End-of-Year Report I'd like to quote part of **By-Law V**: Standing Committees.

L. Policy Committee

There shall be a Policy Committee whose responsibility shall be to review the Constitution and By-Laws and to recommend changes in accordance with the current procedures and programs of the Association. Change considerations shall be initiated through the Executive Board.

One important development for this committee this year is that the SHTA Constitution and By-Laws are now online. Not long ago our best method of archiving our Constitution and By-Laws was to have it on as many computers as our members would tolerate. But now our own website is able to act as one (but not the only) layer of insurance as we protect our core documents.

For next year I would like to see us address an ambiguity in the part of our Constitution that describes how to change a By-Law. It would be nice to clear that up.

It has been a privilege to serve on the Executive Board this year. Have a great summer.

*Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholz, chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

I am pleased to be able to write my final legislative brief in the wake of another successful levy campaign. Shaker Heights stands out as a notably supportive and informed community especially given the complexity of Ohio School Law. It has been one of the few bright spots in writing this column over the last several years. Despite the disheartening education policy agendas at both the state and national levels, I have really enjoyed working with so many members of SHTA. As I write my final column, I would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of SHTA leaders and representatives. For those who do not attend meetings, you would be amazed to see how much time and effort goes into these jobs. I have truly come to realize just how important it is to all of us, even (or especially) those who do not realize it! Have a great summer.

*Respectfully submitted,
Andi Glickman, chairperson*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

As the school year comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to review the activities of the Public Relations committee. We made donations to the Woodbury African American Female and Male Scholars, the Shaker Family Connections Center, the Middle School Scholars program and the Shaker Heights Girls Crew team. We advertised in Shaker Life Magazine, the Shakerite and the Gristmill. We also recognized the National Merit Scholars in our December ads. Finally, we distributed teacher appreciation gifts during the first week in May.

I want to also say thank you to Dr. Thomas for giving me the opportunity to continue in the role of Public Relations Chair for the Executive Board. I continue to learn many things about our Association serving in this role. I want to share one last though however. I want to say thank you to Gary Raymont for helping me along the way with the different roles I have served in the Association. I, along with many others, will miss Gary's enthusiastic reports and his guidance. I wish him the best in his much deserved retirement. I hope everyone has a safe and relaxing summer.

*Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ashbaugh, chairperson*

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This spring, 19 teachers were granted tenure from the Shaker Heights Board of Education. They will be recognized at the District Recognition Tea on May 27th. I would like to congratulate the following teachers who are receiving tenure this year: Erick Anderson – Mercer, Jeffrey Bulgrin – High School, Robert Cheney – High School, Bethany DeCapua – Middle School, Tracey Gerstenberger – Lomond, Ronald Grosel – Middle School, Elizabeth Jaryga – Woodbury, Christine McCandless – High School, Cynthia Miller – Middle School, Shannon Morris – Mercer, Adam Mortus – Lomond, Sarah Mulligan – Onaway, Erika Pfeiffer – Middle School, Noel Polantz – Mercer, Patricia Rashid – Mercer, Lauren Rollins – Boulevard, Barbara Rose – Mercer, Elizabeth Siegel – Mercer and Anne Whidden – Fernway. Congratulations to all of you.

The main focus of the Teacher Education Committee is a liaison for newly hired and non-tenured teachers. Throughout the year, I answered questions from teachers with the help of Becky Thomas. At the September New Teacher meeting, packets, which discussed our Association's history as well as pertinent areas of the contract, were given to each new teacher. I went over the Evaluation process for all new teachers and parts of the SHTA Contract.

The Evaluation process remains an area of focus for new and non-tenured teachers. Throughout the course of the school year, I sent letters reminding all new and non-tenured teachers of deadlines and lines of support that were available to them.

I have enjoyed this position as Teacher Education Chair. I feel that even though I am an experienced teacher, there are always new ideas to learn from less experienced teachers. As educators, we too should never stop learning. Thank you for this opportunity to work on behalf of the Association. Wishing you a calm end-of-the -year and a relaxing summer!

*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Smith, chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP FOR THE 1ST**SEMESTER**

<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>MEMBERS</u>
BOULEVARD	25
FERNWAY	23
LOMOND	34
MERCER	32
ONAWAY	32
WOODBURY	63
MIDDLE SCHOOL	73
SENIOR HIGH	143
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>425</i>

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP FOR THE 2ND**SEMESTER**

<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>MEMBERS</u>
BOULEVARD	25
FERNWAY	24
LOMOND	34
MERCER	33
ONAWAY	32
WOODBURY	63
MIDDLE SCHOOL	72
SENIOR HIGH	143
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>426</i>

On Monday, May 17, 2010, the membership will elect the representatives of the Association and vote on the proposed budget. An addendum will follow with the results from the upcoming election.

THE 2009-2011 SHAKER HEIGHTS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OFFICER CANDIDATES

President	Rebecca Thomas
Vice-President	Dollye Finney
Secretary	Matthew Zucca
Treasurer	William Scanlon

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

May 10, 2010

Onaway School

Rebecca Thomas, SHTA President, called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

Lynn Cowen, principal, welcomed the SHTA Representative Council to Onaway School.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Superintendent Dr. Mark Freeman attended the meeting in place of Ms. Lisa Howell. Dr. Freeman thanked the staff for their support and assistance with the levy. He also thanked the teachers for all the work they do every day with kids. He answered questions from the rep. council.

PTO REPORT: There was no representative present at the meeting.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

PRESIDENT

Rebecca Thomas thanked all those who helped with passing the levy. She congratulated Boulevard School for winning the levy fund campaign contest. She reported that she has been working on personnel issues during the past month. She thanked Debbie Ashbaugh for the Teacher Appreciation gifts. She also thanked Darlene Garrison for planning the spring bowling event.

Dr. Thomas announced that the recipient of the SHTA President's Award for 2010 is Dollye Finney. Dollye will receive her award at the District Recognition Reception on May 27.

Becky recognized retirees George Harley and Gary Raymont.

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dollye Finney stated that the Night for the Red and White earned over \$100,000. She stated the event was well attended with over 740 tickets sold. 92 of the tickets were purchased by staff. She asked that this year's SHTA fellowship recipients submit receipts to claim their awards.

SECRETARY

Matt Zucca presented the final attendance report and explained the procedure for calculating total attendance for the 2009-2010 school year.

TREASURER

Bill Scanlon reported that the members collected almost \$4,000 for the Levy fund. He distributed the SHTA's current financial report and the proposed budget for the 2010-2011 school year. There was a discussion on how dues are allocated. Darcel Arrington made a motion that \$1,000 be transferred from Legal to Public Relations. Dollye Finney seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Darcel Arrington made a motion that \$1,000 be transferred from Negotiations to Public Relations. Dollye Finney seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Darcel Arrington made a motion that \$1,000 be transferred from Publications to Public Relations. Dollye Finney seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Joel Rathbone made a motion that there be a 0% increase in the salaries of the officers, PR&R chair, and newsletter editor. The motion was seconded by Cari Flox. The motion was approved. Dee Arrington moved and Robert Bognar seconded the motion that there be no increase to the representatives' stipends. This motion was unanimously approved. The budget proposal will be on the election ballot on May 17.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS**MEMBERSHIP**

Stacy Elgart reported that there will be an election held on Monday, May 17. On the ballot will be the 2010-2011 budget proposal, and building representatives for the 2010-2011 school year.

SALARY/TENURE

Rebecca Thomas stated that she will be working on surveys for the next contract.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Ashbaugh thanked all the head reps. for passing out the teacher appreciation gifts.

POLICY

Dave Klapholz had no report.

SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison has finalized preparations for the Recognition Reception on May 27. It will be held at the Shaker Heights High School cafeteria at 3:45 p.m.

PUBLICATIONS

John Morris stated that submissions for the Newsletter are due Wednesday. He also reminded executive board members to submit end-of-the-year reports. He expressed his gratitude to Dr. Thomas, Doug Myles and George Harley for their editorial support.

LEGISLATIVE

Andi Glickman's report will be published in the newsletter.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Gary Raymont was unable to attend the meeting.

LEGAL AID

Mike Sears had no report.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Steve Smith was unable to attend the meeting.

BUILDING REPORTS

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

The High School is working with Gary Raymont on a personnel issue.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Darcel Arrington made a motion to accept the budget proposal. Bonnie Hoynacke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

John Morris thanked Dr. Thomas for her dedication and her constant professionalism in her efforts as association president.

Becky thanked Susan Mears and Bonnie Hoynacke for hosting our meeting. She also congratulated Steve Smith and Jill Schumacher on the recent award they won.

The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

SECRETARY'S YEAR END REPORT

This year I attended all executive board and representative council meetings. My responsibilities included maintaining attendance records and recording notes of the proceedings at the meetings. My reports were published monthly in the SHTA Newsletter. My duties have also included maintaining communications with members of representative council.

I organized our annual "Night for the Red and White" drawing. This involved preparing and distributing tickets and collecting proceeds. As a representative of the SHTA, I also attended the event. Thank you for allowing me to serve you as an officer of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Zucca, secretary

Editorial: Another Year's End

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.

It's been a busy year, to say the least. The Imagine Shaker interviews, contract negotiations, and passing a school levy all occupied our lives and minds as Shaker Teachers. Fortunately, we experienced success along the way. However, challenges remain to be seen as we head into negotiations once again next year.

The highlights are obvious. Teachers, administrators and community members all came together to conduct and take part in nearly one thousand interviews as a part of our district's continued strategic planning. Likewise, the same groups were vital to the successful passage of our school levy and the continuance of our valued programs.

Shtaweb.org was launched due to the diligence and vision of our president, Dr. Thomas. There is a lot to feel good about.

Questions continue to loom on the horizon. How will the state address our growing budget deficit and its continued unconstitutional stance on education funding? How will our district maintain its own budget while remaining a competitive force in drawing and keeping high quality educators in Shaker? What will we do as an Association to foster continuing leadership and strengthen our organization? The answers remain to be seen.

All that I am certain of is that the SHTA is part of finding the answers to these questions that best represent our membership, our school, our students and our community. And I am proud to be a member of this Association.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my excellent editorial board: Dr. Thomas, Doug Myles and George Harley. George has been a foundational member of this organization and a legendary teacher in the district. His presence will be sorely missed. I would also like to congratulate Dollye Finney for her President's Award. Dollye's tireless efforts for the Association are part of the reason why I am proud to be a member of this organization. And finally, I would like to thank Dr. Thomas for setting such a strong example as Association President. So much of what Becky does is unrecognized by our Association but nevertheless vital to our strength. The seemingly endless number meetings, conferences, consultations and phone calls she takes part in as President of the SHTA is truly daunting. But she does it with such a level of professionalism and class that she makes it seem effortless. I thank Becky for her example.

I wish all of you a wonderful summer. I look forward to serving you as editor next year. I also look forward to seeing your faces, hearing your voices and representing your perspectives in the pages of this newsletter. As a part of this effort, I am leaving you with an "Open Letter to President Barack Obama" written by Andrew Glasier from the High School concerning President Obama's latest positions regarding American education. JM

An Open Letter to President Barack Obama

When I voted for you I sensed that you understood little about public education in this country. You spoke so little about this on the campaign trail, focusing primarily on other issues; yet I hoped that the combination of your intelligence and background as a community organizer would help you "get it." I was disappointed quickly with your choice of Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, a former superintendent of Chicago City schools and not a teacher. Don't let his claim that he once taught fool you: an excellent administrator does NOT clearly understand the issues of classroom teaching, even if they once were a fabulous teacher. Duncan, whose idea of reform is largely comprised of starting charter schools and ending tenure. Neither of these ideas can be considered progressive or reform minded. Eradicating tenure will surely lead to the dismissal of good teachers, leaving in their place people who will indiscriminately follow administrator's initiatives. Charter schools have failed to live to their promises, in many cases underperforming compared to their counterparts in public education. Since most of

these programs involve selective admissions (as opposed to open enrollment) they are not reforms; these are band-aids.

But your latest acknowledgement that the firing of all the teachers at Central Falls High School was a positive step in the reform process was the final blow. You clearly do not understand public education, nor the factors that lead to poor performance by students on state mandated tests. You may believe that teachers at these schools are not trying to help their students. You must (falsely) think that teachers can fix all the socio-economic problems faced by our struggling students. If you hope that politicians can fix the problems of education, please revisit your sources of information.

I have been an educator in Ohio for eleven years, and during that time period politicians have added paperwork, costs, stress, and of course testing... lots and lots of testing, to an already overloaded system. In the past fifteen years, politicians have changed curriculum and the tests meant to assess them three times. From Proficiency tests to Ohio Graduation Tests to possibly the ACT the way the state assesses students and through them schools and teachers continues to change with little sense of how it affects teaching or learning. The result is that people must teach to tests with curriculum too rigid to allow for creativity, which is essential to good teaching and learning. A friend of mine who is a marketing business executive confided that even he was concerned that standards have killed creativity in schools. As teaching becomes less flexible, I see the our youngest staff become quickly exasperated by their lack of control. Is it healthy to encourage people to leave the profession within the first five years? It certainly doesn't seem cost effective. When I hear politicians and academics try to scientifically break teaching into "research based" strategies much like Henry Ford did to car manufacturing. The problem of course is we are dealing with students, each unique with his or her strengths and weaknesses. Good teaching requires good teachers. Even Diane Ravitch finally gets it: the accountability regime does not work.

To truly transform education, I would suggest a focus on two fundamental keys to teacher success: good teachers' colleges and involved parents. Teachers' colleges have become notorious for admitting underperforming students and providing a weak curriculum. Many education professionals avoid education classes because they lack the academic rigor that other courses of study provide. Education departments should be able to be much more selective, and ideally to provide an experience more in line with other respected professions. A fifth year of schooling in which pre-service teachers apprentice with master teachers in the field would allow these novice teachers to better understand how educational philosophy is enacted in schools and to have a smoother transition, ideally lessening attrition in the workforce. Some universities have already begun the process, but many more professors employ techniques that chase many well meaning people away from education as they want to be challenged and pushed to their intellectual limits. We should entice people through high standards for teachers' colleges that provide a pathway to a respected professional field, rather than throwing nerf balls their way or reading children's books out loud to adult students.

Many parents need to be trained on how to help their children through school. Helping parents learn how to support students and building partnerships between school districts and parents would yield not only "improved test scores," but probably more success for more students. Broward County, Florida is an example of a district that have created Parent Universities with great success.

Our innovative public educational system is a big part of what made America great; our ability to create and collaborate in unique ways led many of the best and brightest from around the world to American universities to learn. We need to regain our competitive edge not by copying the educational techniques of other countries but by focusing on what makes us unique... our drive and creativity. My colleagues can be the most creative people I know. I have seen them design lessons, simulations, and other strategies that have taught students in unique and comprehensive ways. Some of these lessons have not gone as planned, yet students still learned! By constricting the educational system with testing and touting performance-based pay (a policy that cannot be successfully developed and maintained because there is not enough money even now) we digress to a system that will implode. I implore you, Mr. President, to look to teachers and parents as ways of moving our system forward.

Educationally Yours,
Andrew Glasier

DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, May 17	SHTA Elections Building Representatives Budget
Thursday, May 27	District Employee Recognition Reception at 3:45 in the HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA (program begins around 4:15)
Monday, May 31	Memorial Day – No School
Thursday, June 10	Last Day of School for Students
Friday, June 11	Close of School/Clerical Day