The Beacon

The Official Publication of the Belmont Education Association

BEA Telephone: 993-5860

Fall 2010 Edition



Editor: Sue Dixon sdixon@belmont.k12.ma.us

President's Message

About a week ago, I sent out a message on IContact to the membership asking for your help with the election on November 2 (reprinted on page 5 of the BEACON). We have gotten an amazing positive response from the membership on both requests, volunteering to do some phone banking and filling out the MTA white cards. But there are still many of you who have not "stepped up to the plate". When I met with the BEA Executive Board last week, I talked about the need to step out of the "comfort zone" if we want to succeed in protecting our pensions, our medical benefits, and our job security. The threat is real! Please read the political literature that is out there. If Charlie Baker is elected, all of it will be on the table. He has made it clear that he will eliminate 5000 government jobs. That is us he is talking about! As I mentioned on Opening Day, it is no longer possible to sit on the sidelines, those days are long gone. To secure our rights, our benefits, and adequate funding for our schools we must all be involved in the political process; that is the reality of the landscape of funding for education today.

The election is 4 weeks away. There is still much you can do to help. If you are willing to do some phone banking, one night, from approximately 5 to 8pm, we are joining with Cambridge and Somerville teachers at the Cambridge Teachers Association Office (Mass Ave, Cambridge) in making those calls. The evenings are Oct 5, 6, 7, and Oct 12, 13, 14. Phones, scripts, dinner will be provided. We are calling only MTA members. If you are interested please contact me. And bring a friend!

In addition to the Governor's race, of major importance is the defeat of Question 3. Of the four candidates that are running for governor, about the only thing they all agree on is that the Commonwealth cannot sustain a cut of \$2.5 billion at a time when cities and towns are already struggling to provide basic services. We must work to defeat Question 3. All of us must talk to our friends, families, neighbors, and encourage them to help defeat Question 3.

And one last pitch! - I know many of you are sitting back, reading this, saying someone else can take care of this, I hate politics, that's why we have elected our officers. But the reality is we cannot do it alone. If we want to protect our benefits, our jobs, and public education, we must all be involved.

Get to Know Your BEA

BEA Officers/Chairpersons

President Robert Antonellis Vice President John Sullivan, Jr. Jonathan Hartunian Treasurer Denise LaPolla Secretary Grievance Chair Ben DeLorio Christina Westfall **Voucher Committee Chair** Susan Gorman Membership Beacon Editor Sue Dixon Susan Gorman **Election Committee BEA Website Manager** John Sullivan, Jr.

BEA Building Representatives

Burbank: Selina Anderson

Jessica Ames

Butler: Brian Bisceglia-Kane

Adrienne Landry

Connie Page

Wellington: Carolyn Bell

Laurie Carlson

Winn Brook: Jean Griot-Cross

Nicole Torniero

Chenery: Elizabeth Getchell (Grade 5)

Leon Dyer (Grade 6)

Lisa Connell

(Vacancies)

High School Patricia Partridge (Science)

Fiona Crimmins (Foreign Language)

Jacqueline Lovett (Math) Josh Steit (Social Studies) Andrew Roy (Fine Arts) Andrea Kalember (English)

Mike Bruno (Special Ed)

Craig Paczkowski (Guidance)

Unit B (Vacant)

Unit D Cheryl Shushan (Wellington)

Bethany Fitzsimmons (Winn Brook)



Professional Status

Below is a list of all teachers who achieved Professional Teacher Status in the spring of 2010. They will be honored at a reception on October 5 from 6:30 to 7:30 PM, prior to the School Committee meeting.

Sarkis Asadoorian, Wellness, High School Brian Bisceglia-Kane, Grade 3, Butler Rebecca Bourke, Grade 6 Eng/SS, Chenery Carolyn Brownsberger, Biology, High School Kathleen Byrnes, Art, Chenery Bryan Corrigan, AP Economics, High School Melissa Crough, Grade 4, Winn Brook Cindy Crowley, Resource, Butler Leon Dyer, Technology, Chenery Stacy Farrell, Health, Chenery Janet Flaherty, Grade 3, Burbank Erin Fortunato, Foreign Language, Chenery Lauren Hannon, Grade 1, Butler Kelley Hurley, Preschool, Winn Brook Elizabeth Kornbluth, Speech & Language, Chenery Sean Landers, Choral Director, High School Melissa Latham, English, High School

Mark Lefebvre, Physics, High School Erin McCarthy, Special Education, High School Katherine Metter, Social Studies, Chenery Heidi Naumes, Math, High School Kellye O'Brien, Grade 2, Wellington Erin O'Bryan, Grade 6 Language Arts/SS, Chenery Suzanne Pomponio, Grade 3, Winn Brook Margot Reavey, Orchestra Director, High School Anne Scally, Speech & Language, Wellington Rebecca Tannenbaum, Behavior Support, Wellington Laura Tracey, Grade 6 Language Arts/SS, Chenery Christina Virgilio, Math, High School Ann Walsh, Kindergarten, Wellington Anne Marie Wayne, English, High School Cheryl Wilson, Science, High School Xin Yu, Foreign Language, High School

ICONTACT

We still need all staff to sign onto IContact. If you have not yet signed up, the instructions are below.

- 1. Go to the BEA website: belmont.massteacher.org
- 2. From the scrolling banner at the top of the page, click on "IContact Staff E-mail"
- 3. Type in your name as printed on your MTA membership card (no middle initial) and your MTA-ID number printed (contact Sue Gorman or Bob Antonellis if you do not have your MTA ID number) next to your name on the card.
- 4. Hit "Log-in"
- 5. Fill in all the requested information.
- 6. Hit "Submit"

This year is a negotiating year for a new contract for the teachers (Unit A). Communication between the membership and the Negotiating Team will be only via IContact. The survey that generates the BEA's proposal to the School Committee will be done through IContact only. In order to participate in the survey, you MUST be registered with IContact.

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Antonellis or John Sullivan.

Call for Vouchers

- If anyone has a college or university voucher they are •
- not using, please forward it to a member of the
- Voucher Committee so that it can be distributed to a staff member. Your Voucher Committee members
- Christina Westfall (chair), Wellington

- Julia King, High School
- Lisa O'Sullivan, Burbank
 - Bob McCorkle, Winn Brook
- Nicole Nitchie, Chenery
- Kristin Romig, Butler

Make Note!

Teachers submitting any paper work for tuition reimbursement and/or movement on the salary schedule must submit it to Mary Pederson, Human Resource Manager.

You can get the Tuition Reimbursement Form in the main office of your school and online.

All BEA members should have received the MTA 2010-2011 pocket calendar and the MTA Benefits & Discount directory plus your 2010-2011 membership card. If you did not, contact Bob Antonellis.

Local Numbers:

BEA Office (Bob Antonellis) (617) 993-5860 Belmont Town Hall (617) 993-2600 School Payroll (Gina Hayes) (617) 993-5433 Health Insurance (Carole Pessotti) (617) 993-2740 cpessotti@belmont-MA.gov

Belmont Selectman Office (617) 993-2610

MTA Numbers:

MTA Benefits (800) 336-0990 **MTRB** (617) 679-6877 MTA Retirement Consultant (Howard Crowley) (617) 742-7950

Other Numbers:

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Social Security Information (800) 772-1213

(617) 886-1000 or (617) 886-1107 Delta Dental

Harvard Pilgrim Member Serv (888) 333-4742

Dues for 2010-2011

Units A and B

NEA	\$166.00
MTA	\$453.00
BEA	 \$184.00
Total	\$803.00

The total dues for members of Units A or B who work half time or less is

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Unit D	Full	Less than 20 hrs
NEA	\$ 96.50	\$53.50
MTA	\$136.00	\$68.00
BEA	\$ 64.00	\$32.00
Total	\$296.50	\$153.50

The BEA Office is located on the first floor of Belmont High School (617)993-5860 in the Music Department.

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403b Tax Sheltered Annuity Information

Effective January 1, 2009, the Belmont Public Schools have been required by the IRS to comply with new regulations regarding 403b plans. It is the district's responsibility to monitor both the plan documents and the contribution levels of school employees. Because of the new requirements, and the amount of work required to comply, the School Department has decided to restrict any new enrollees in a 403b plan to seven (7) vendors. They are:

> Great American Life, Fidelity Annuity, Metropolitan Life, Capital Annuity, MEL L Ives Annuity, Vanguard Annuity, Equitable Annuity

Please note: Existing accounts with all other vendors will continue to be honored for current staff as long as an employee is working for the district. An employee will be able to continue making contributions to his/her plan as she/he has done in the past.

Please contact Mary Pederson, Human Resources Manager, if you have any questions about this information.

The Death and Life of the **Great American School System**

by Diane Ravitch

The BEA has several copies of this Diane Ravitch book which examines how the hotly debated issues of "choice" and "testing" are undermining education.

Diane Ravitch—former assistant secretary of education and a leader in the drive to create a national curriculumexamines her career in education reform and repudiates positions that she once staunchly advocated. Drawing on over forty years of research and experience, Ravitch critiques today's most popular ideas for restructuring school, including privatization, standardized testing, punitive accountability, and the feckless multiplication of charter schools. She shows conclusively why the business model is not an appropriate way to improve schools. Using examples from major cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, and San Diego, Ravitch makes the case that public education today is in peril.

If you would like to borrow a copy, contact Bob Antonellis.

BEA COMMITTEES, 2010—2011

PR&R (Professional Rights and Responsibilities) Committee/ Negotiating Team

Robert Antonellis, President John Sullivan, Vice Pres. (Chair) Kelly Prevost, High School Rep. Cliff Gallant, Elementary Rep. Ben DeLorio, Grievance Chair Julie Babson, System-wide Eliot Small, MTA Rep. Denise LaPolla, Elementary Rep. Lisa Connell, Chenery Rep.

Union Health Insurance Coalition (Townwide)

Robert Antonellis
John Sullivan

Unit B Negotiating Team

Robert Antonellis Jim Davis, Dir. of Athletics Bill Pappazisis, Dir. of Fine Arts

Bill Pappazisis, Dir. of Fine Arts Dan Richards, Asst. Principal HS

Unit D Negotiating Team

Cheryl Shushan, Wellington Bethany Fitzsimmons, Winn Brook Eliot Small, MTA Rep. Robert Antonellis, BEA President John Sullivan, BEA Vice-President

Insurance Advisory Committee (Townwide)

Robert Antonellis

Sick Leave Bank Committee

Robert Antonellis, President John Sullivan, Vice President Elizabeth Getchell, Chenery

Voucher Committee

Christina Westfall, Wellington (chair)

Julia King, High School Lisa O'Sullivan, Burbank Bob McCorkle, Winn Brook Nicole Nitchie, Chenery Kristin Romig, Butler

Election Committee

Susan Gorman (chair)

BEACON

Sue Dixon (Editor), High School

Contribution Levels to Individual Retirement Accounts for Fiscal 2010

- The annual investment level is \$16,500.
- If you are age 50 or older this year, you can contribute \$22,000.
 - If you are interested in beginning an annuity or making a change to a current annuity, contact Gina Hayes, Payroll Department.

BEA Executive Board Meetings 2010-2011

September 22

March 16

October 13

April 27

November 17

May 18

December 15 (tentative)

June 8 (tentative)

January 19

February 16

All meetings are held in the High School conference room 144B and will begin at 3:15.

In order to keep our BEA and MTA records up-to-date, please email Sue Gorman at CMS with any name or address changes. Thank you!

The BEA has a website !!! belmont.massteacher.org

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To get the latest information on your union officers, contract news, meeting schedules, retirement information and much more.....

You can also view and print copies of each contract.

EVERY MEMBER SHOULD HAVE A COPY OF THEIR UN-ION CONTRACT. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A COPY, CONTACT BOB ANTONELLIS.



Guest Column

The Past, the Present and the Future Thomas J. Gosnell, President, AFT Massachusetts

(Reprinted by permission from the AFT-MA Advocate)

This fall is the fiftieth anniversary of the election of John F. Kennedy as the President of the USA and the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the election of Abraham Lincoln. Both 1860 and 1960 were decades of transformative change for the nation.

In 1860 very few Americans had much education. President Lincoln himself had perhaps a couple of years of formal schooling. In 1960 we were just a few years beyond a time when less than half of Americans had a high school diploma.

The extraordinary economic, social, and technological development of the past fifty years have produced a much more educated population and a view that our citizens must make even greater gains in their education. This decade will be one of great change for public education. We don't yet know where that change will bring us, but we do know that the voice of classroom educators, those who are most knowledgeable about the needs of our students, must be eloquent and robust.

Let's look at one of the issues about which the voice of educators must immediately be eloquent and robust.

Question 3

Despite this widely held view that education is very important, there are those who believe that government must be smaller and that taxes, which provide far and away the greatest amount of support for the schools must be less.

Question 3 wants to reduce the sales tax from 6-1/4 percent to 3 percent. This will cut 2.5 billion dollars in services. If passed this November, public schools, and do not forget public libraries, will suffer enormously. Smaller government and lower taxes guarantee less education. How can anyone believe the average citizen will benefit when public education gets less resources?

Bob Herbert, writing in the New York Times on Saturday, September 11, 2010 stated that "the self-serving conservative belief that the way to help ordinary people is to shower money on the rich and wait for the blessings to trickle down to the great unwashed below..... was a bogus concept..... in 1980, and it remains bogus today..." Well written.

The command is clear. All of us who belong to the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts need to belong to the campaign to defeat this nefarious proposal. Two years ago we overwhelmed the attempt to repeal the income tax. The political and economic atmosphere is much tougher this time, but the command is clear. **Defeat Question 3.**

Saving our Pensions, our Medical Benefits, our Job Security

The BEA Executive Board met to address what MTA has labeled one of the most critical elections of our time for educators, this November 2nd. Critical to all MTA members is the re-election of Governor Patrick and the defeat of Question 3. On the line is protecting our **pensions**, our **medical coverage**, and our **job security**. Governor Patrick's opponents have said all of these would be "on the table" if elected. And if Question 3 is **not** defeated it would mean a cut of \$2.5 billion dollars from the state revenues, at a time when education needs more not less.

The BEA Reps are being asked to do two things:

- Recruit members to do some phone banking on Oct 5, 6, 7, or Oct 12, 13 14. The BEA reps have the details on time and place. You would be calling only other MTA members.
- Reps are being asked to fill out a card for each member that will be returned to MTA. It is asking each member 4 questions. Again the reps will share with you the details.

The BEA reps, as busy as everyone else, have agreed to take on this time-consuming endeavor, contacting each member, recruiting for phone banking, and filling out the cards. I ask that you make it as easy for them as possible to get the job done. As the title of this message says, our pensions, our medical coverage, our job security are all on the line and we need all MTA members to be aware and involved in this very important election on November 2nd. ~ Bob

The BEA has:

- bumper stickers for the re-election of Governor Patrick
- bumper stickers for the defeat of Question 3
- lawn signs for the re-election of the governor
- lawn signs for the defeat of Question 3

Contact Bob if you want any of the items above

If interested in participating in a "honk" parade on October 10 to defeat Question 3, contact Danette English in the High School/Chenery Art Department.

SWAP SHOP

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FREE: Sewing/Craft Table with a leaf that folds out for extra-workspace. Many years ago, it used to house an old black Singer machine that could fold down inside. The old Singer is gone, but you can still store supplies inside. Email for pictures if you are interested. susan_dixon@live.com

Do you have something you want to buy or sell?
Place an ad in the Swap Shop! You can send
Sue Dixon, Beacon Editor, an email anytime.

MTA BENEFITS

Information on more than 30 MTAB programs and discounts is available anytime at www.mtabenefits.com. For your quick reference, listed below is contact information for some of our major programs.

Auto-Home-Business-Umbrella-Workers Comp Educators Insurance Agency—insurance@leia.com 888.908.6822

Dental Insurance—Met Life Resources
Karen Nagle—knagle@metlife.com, 877.705.6390

Disability—Vista Financial
Tom Colbert— Thomas.colbert@ingfp.com
888.646.1972 x3020

Long Term Care Insurance—Vista Financial 888.646.1972 x5102

Mortgage Program—Greenpark Mortgage
 Paul Gershkowitz—pgershkowitz@greenparkmortgage.com
 866.475.4663 x125

MTA Vacation Center—www.mtavacations.com TNT Hot Line—800.940.6541 Go Ahead Tours—888.466.2849

SBLI Life Insurance 877,272.7254

Tax Sheltered Annuity—Met Life Randy Feid 508,870.1925 x1724

Term & Permanent Life Insurance—Vista Financial 888.646.1972 x3015

If you are not registered on the MTA Benefits Website, you can register now and receive a \$5 Borders Gift Card.*

*While supplied last

Recommended Reading



Zeitoun by Dave Eggers. The story of one man's experience after Hurricane Katrina, Abdulrahman Zeitoun, a successful Syrian-born painting contractor, decides to stay in New Orleans and protect his property.

<u>The Unnamed</u> by Joshua Ferris. A book about a man who goes walking for no apparent reason. Well written and engrossing.

CURRENT DENTAL INSURANCE RATES

Yearly Weekly Monthly

Individual \$468.00 \$9.00 \$39.00 Family \$1,164.00 \$22.38 \$97.00

CURRENT HEALTH INSURANCE RATES

	Yearly	Monthly
Harvard Pilgrim	PPO	
Individual	\$5,689.47	\$474.12
Family	\$15,475.32	\$1,289.61
Harvard Pilgrim		
Individual	\$1,425.11	\$118.76
Family	\$3,861.09	\$321.76

MTA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The MTA is offering many Professional Development courses to help you improve your teaching.

There are face-to-face workshops and online courses, as well as combination hybrid classes. Some classes offer PDP credits, while others may be taken for graduate or undergraduate credit. Course offerings vary, ranging from "New Teacher Webinars" to "Mentoring" to "Standards-based Instruction" to "Differentiation Practices".

Registration for Semester 1 ends on November 2 and registration for Semester 2 ends on February 15. Catalogs are available in your school's teachers lounge or by contacting your school union representative. Information is available online at www.massteacher.org/cepp.