

DFT Gets Layoffs Rescinded

The DFT and the Detroit Public Schools signed a Letter of Agreement Feb. 26 to rescind the 72 teacher layoffs that were to go into effect on or before March 7. They also agreed to cancel the transfers of more than 50 other teachers.

The union was able to convince the district that disrupting classrooms this late in the year was not worth the cost savings to the budget.

“We were looking at 54 school days to go,” said DFT President Keith Johnson. “I can’t overstate how disruptive this would have been and how gratified we are to save these jobs.”

DFT Executive Vice President Mark O’Keefe said the jobs should be saved permanently when factoring the number of retirements expected this year.

The agreement had several highlights:

- It resulted in the immediate rescission of the layoffs of 72 teachers that were scheduled to take place Feb. 28 and March 7.
- It eliminated the need to transfer over 50 other teachers, primarily in fine arts, music and physical education.
- It allowed teachers in elementary schools to maintain their daily prep periods.
- It allowed the preservation of \$46 million in federal funding for our early childhood program with the agreement to complete, and if necessary, revise the early childhood and kindergarten report cards to ensure we are in compliance with state and federal guidelines.
- It maintained educational and academic stability throughout the Detroit Public Schools. Students will not have to re-acclimate to new teachers, new teaching styles and other key relationships between teachers and children.
- The district has agreed to pay up to 30 days pay to employees who were improperly laid off in June 2009.
- Finally, it ensured employment stability for the affected teachers for the duration of the 2009-10 school year.



The Renaissance symphony orchestra, symphony and jazz bands will perform in Europe between April 28 and May 6. They are \$70,000 short of their goal. Friends of the arts may contribute by check to Renaissance High School Instrumental Music Boosters, 6565 West Outer Drive, Detroit, MI 48235. Please write “European Concert Tour” on the check.

Willie McAllister has a dream to enhance the image of Detroit Public Schools.

McAllister, the band and orchestra teacher at Renaissance High School, dreams of taking the public on a walk through the district. The public would see the manners and professionalism of his and other high-caliber students throughout the district.

The public would see 40 kids with different instruments sitting at attention and waiting for direction.

The public would see a wind student trying to master his piece in front of his peers. The public would see his peers cheering his accomplishment. The public would see students playing for Mayor Dave Bing’s inaugural, or performing at AA Class competitions, or at Carnegie Hall or Disney World.

“They may see us on the parade route,” McAllister says. “But they don’t see the students performing some of the top literature that is written for bands and orchestra.”

The public would also see the awe and honor the 32-year teacher reaps from his students as he mounts the podium to conduct.

There’s a big generational gap between McAllister and his teenage students. But the Northwestern High graduate is awesome to his students. When Renaissance held a ceremony for the 44 students who got a 4.0 gpa in the first semester, 14 were music students. McAllister is taking 60 band students to perform in Germany, Austria and Italy in early May.

“I feel I can reach these kids,” McAllister says. “I can take them to places in this world they may never

be able to see – a segment of the world that appreciates what they do.”

McAllister says music education improves academic achievement for all students.

“Through the discipline of music, there’s no shortcut,” he says. “It’s just hard work.”

The proof of the dendrites and synapses building in the brain, and the discipline that music education produces is in the students who succeed in professional life.

McAllister’s year 2000 graduates are now practicing medicine and law. One former student is a nuclear physicist.

“Music gave them the outlet to use the creative side of their brain,” he said. “The discipline of music is transferrable to any discipline. Music transcends them all – that’s why it’s called the universal language.”

ARE WE TO BE TEACHERS OR ARE WE TESTERS?

Dibbles, Bursts, MME, MEAP, QBA, ACT, PreSAT. We have a virtual alphabet soup of tests that teachers are expected to issue throughout the school year. This does not include the tests that teachers attempt to give to students to determine how well they have grasped concepts of the lessons they have taught. While we certainly understand the need to do assessments on how well our students are progressing, there is a serious concern that many of our students and their teachers will “test-out and tune out.”

With all of these tests, when are teachers allowed to focus on the basic concepts of the subject areas they teach, particularly at the elementary level? These “little people” (as I affectionately call elementary children



DFT President Keith Johnson explains the onslaught of testing and other issues to a TV crew.

President’s Report



Keith Johnson

due to my fear of ever having to teach them) are being saturated with tests at such young ages that many of them get turned off to learning early in the school year and end up being less

proficient (according to test scores) than they might have been were they not so inundated with testing.

The cumbersome task of dissecting the testing information diverts teachers’ attention from assessing the need to re-teach concepts that they know their children have not mastered. Teachers complain that with the demands upon them to keep up with pacing charts, the perpetual testing mandates inhibit their ability to ensure that children are able to move along in their skill development aligned with the dictates of the pacing charts.

When the high levels of truancy

and transiency are factored in, the challenges faced by teachers are compounded. The proficiency levels of the children are less reflective of their potential and more reflective of their challenges, including poor attendance.

District leaders should take into consideration that teachers and students need to have the time and opportunity to do self assessments. Teachers need the time and opportunity to analyze and determine what skill sets need to be re-enforced to students who are struggling. They need time to learn which skills have been mastered and determine a

methodology for their students to put those skills to practical application.

While testing is a necessary component for measuring student progress, students and teachers should not be placed in a position where the test is more important than the concepts the tests are predicated upon. The real measure should be how those concepts are effectively applied to everyday learning and teaching activities. Otherwise, we tend to find ourselves teaching to the test, rather than teaching to the children. That is not the standard bearer for teacher effectiveness or student progress.

Union Holds Workshop for Building Reps

DFT Building Representatives got a refresher course on the purpose of a union at a workshop Jan. 30 at the DFT hall.

The Detroit building reps got updates on disseminating important union business and building unity as the largest teachers union in Michigan.

What kind of union do we want?

“Because of our legacy of achievement, our legacy of accomplishment, our legacy of strength, we know that whatever the challenge, we can overcome it,” DFT President Keith Johnson told the building reps.

However, teacher unions across America are facing tough times. It takes more power and pressure on political leaders for them to understand what happens in the classroom.

“Given all the challenges from the national, state and absolutely the local level, what’s the essential ingredient every union needs to succeed?” said Dave Hecker, AFT Michigan president.

The answer is solidarity.

“We build our power through solidarity,” he said. “Power is getting people involved. We want to show the power of 7,000 people.”

Hecker said the union doesn’t exist only to bargain contracts. And the role of building reps isn’t only to try to understand the contract. Unions exist to exercise their power as a voting block and to apply pressure to the political system.

Hecker agreed that the role of a building rep is often to be a sounding board and listen to members’ concerns. But he said one of their most important actions, especially at large schools, is to meet weekly with a core group of building leaders to relay information, fan it out, and ask them to be involved.

“You are the backbone of this union.”



Detroit City High teacher Ibn Pitts won a flat-screen TV from GLP and Associates.



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Editor — Margaret Weertz

Updates...

Retirements

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Margaret (Peggy) Collrin, Patricia Ford, Rosita A. Graham, Joann Olivache, and Selina Roberts. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-3500 ext. 776.

COPE \$10 Fund

Frank Squeo contributed to COPE’s 2009 \$10 campaign. However, his name was not included in the list of contributors.

Scholarship Provides Help for Young People

By Anya Johnson

The Mildred A. Ellis Scholarship was established during the 1989-90 school year in honor of the former director of the Office of School Social Work Service. Ellis was appointed in October 1983 as the first African American to hold that position. Ellis died in June 1988.

The objective of the Mildred A. Ellis Scholarship is to provide assistance to those young people who have overcome adversities while demonstrating the academic and social potential to succeed. For 21 years we, the Detroit Public School social workers, have provided scholarships to 143 of our students as they prepare to enter college.

We have given approximately \$200,000 in scholarships primarily funded through private contributions from the Detroit Public School social workers. The trend will continue this year as once again we recognize Detroit Public School students in May.

We would like to hear from anyone who was a recipient. Contributions can be sent to Mildred A. Ellis Scholarship, c/o Brenda Stuckey, P.O. Box 3386, Southfield, MI 48076.

ers have posted “wish lists” at DonorsChoose.org that include the supplies they need to enrich their students’ learning experiences. This is the first time DonorsChoose.org has actively recruited Detroit teachers to post their classroom project needs.

Knight Foundation is providing a dollar-to-dollar matching grant up to \$100,000 to increase the impact exponentially. Individuals can pick a project to fully or partially fund. Those donating can contribute as little as \$5 to any Detroit classroom project posted on DonorsChoose.org. and Knight Foundation will match the contribution.

To date, DonorsChoose.org, a non-profit website connecting public school teachers in need of resources with donors, has secured funding for \$46 million in books, supplies, technology and other resources.

Teachers Get Supplies Through DonorsChoose.org

Scores of Detroit teachers have gotten grants for classroom supplies from DonorsChoose.org. Detroiters wanting to make a difference in classrooms now have twice the impact by contributing to DonorsChoose.org, thanks to a matching grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

More than 400 enterprising teach-



FISHER TEACHERS RALLY TO HELP HAITI

Three teachers (Patricia Kennebrew, above, Jeanne Mack & Katrice Collins) from Fisher Upper Academy and their students couldn’t watch the devastation in Haiti without doing something. So they got to work making ribbons and T-shirts, designed by former Fisher art teacher Anthony Fink. They sold rubber bracelets and held a free dress day and dance – all to raise money for Haiti. The dance was billed “Hustle 4 Haiti” because the teachers worked with WDIV-TV Channel 4. They raised more than \$1,500. The teachers took the \$1,500 and went shopping at Walgreens on Kelly and 8 Mile Road. Walgreens matched by 10 percent what the teachers purchased.

Important Information about the Retirement Process

By Patrick Falcusan
DFT Retirement Counselor

It appears that the end of this school year will see a record number of retirements from the district. Several questions always



Patrick Falcusan

pop up when folks retire: What happens to my health care? When does the payment for my sick days come? When does my pension start, etc.? Below are many of the answers.

Q: What happens to my health care?

A: Your district insurance will stop the last day of the month you retire (June 30 for those retiring July 1). Your new retirement insurance will start the first day of the month you retire (July 1 for those retiring July 1).

Q: What happens to my pay?

A: For those retiring July 1, 2010, one more regular check will come on July 13, 2010 (both

for 22 pays and 26 pays).

Q: I have 26 pays and retired July 1. What happens to the four checks that normally come in the summer?

A: Those four checks will come along with other monies owed you in one big final check.

Q: When will I get my final check for sick days, TIP monies, last four checks, etc.?

A: In most cases, that final payment will come in mid to late August for folks retiring July 1. (It might be slightly delayed due to the large number of retirements). If you are sheltering or buying time with any of this money, you must have notified the district ahead of time.

Q: When will my pension begin?

A: Most folks retiring July 1 will get two pension payments in August: one payment in mid August and one payment at the end of August.

Q: Can I work after I retire July 1?

A: You can not work for a school district that is part of the retirement

system for one month after you retire.

Q: If I get a job after I retire, will I have a limit on how much I can earn?

A: If you work for a school district that is part of the Michigan retirement system and are not collecting Social Security, the answer is yes. You would have a limit of one-third of your final salary average – around \$20,000 to \$24,000 for most folks.

If you work somewhere that is not part of the Michigan retirement system and are not collecting Social Security, you can earn as much as you want.

Q: Will collecting Social Security impact how much I can earn?

A: Yes, between 62 and 66 (or your full Social Security age) there is a Social Security annual limit of approximately \$14,000 on how much can be earned without impacting your Social Security.

After 66 (or your full Social Security age), neither the state pension system nor Social Security has an earnings cap.

Spain Chess Team Places First in State



Front row: Immanuel Arrington and Bryan Wilson. Second row: Darius Britton, Elana Webster and Marcus Badgett.

By Charlene Uresy, Spain School

Three Cheers for the Spain School chess team!

Spain was the first-place winner of the State of Michigan Scholastic Elementary Chess Tournament at Michigan State University. The four-member team, led by sixth-grade math teacher Elana Webster, participated against 44 different teams from across Michigan, in the second- through fifth-grade division.

The competition took place on a recent Saturday and lasted all day. Spain won first place all around, with one gold medal, and three silver medals. Second-grader Bryan Wilson played first board and won the goal medal. His father taught him the game and plays with him often.

Spain School is proud of the chess team's wonderful achievement. This accomplishment is spreading the news across Michigan that there are good schools, good students, good parents and good teachers in DPS.

100 Days of School



Kindergarten students at Charles H. Wright Academy of Arts and Science celebrated the 100th day of school Feb. 24. Despite the snow days, we made it! We have a membership of 96 students.

Students were very excited as they lined up in the hallway with their instruments and hats preparing for a parade. Students paraded throughout the entire building; through the pre-school classrooms, the entire first

floor as well as the second floor, banging and clanging instruments in celebration of the 100th day of school.

Gail Harris in room 109, above, organized the parade, which included students and teachers. Harris' students completed an activity book related to the 100th day of school. All students received a 100th day certificate, pencil, hat and ribbon.

THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

Denby Girls React to the Movie "Precious"

By Kathryn Joyner
Denby High School

Denby High School female students and staff recently went to see the movie "Precious." The movie had a tremendous impact on the girls because of the open, honest, and sometimes heart-wrenching dialogue it created.

After the movie, students and staff met in the auditorium with DPS social workers Diane Courtney, Susan Gallagher, and Angela Garner-Street, and prevention educators from Detroit-based Horizons Project, which works with teenagers.



Kathryn Joyner

But the people who made this wonderful event happen were Denby school social worker Tracie McKissic and Principal Kenyetta Wilbourn.

McKissic asked the girls, "What makes you precious?"

The responses spiraled from students sharing the positive things that make them precious to more intimate sharing about having experiences similar to Precious'. Within an hour everyone was sharing and comforting one another.

A bond of trust and honesty was forming rapidly. The film and discussion brought relationships

between students and even relationships between staff members emotionally closer and opened the door to effective communication and expression.

Everyone seems to realize that we are more alike than different and that age, economics and education didn't matter. We are all part of the human race and feel the same things: hurt, joy, hope, love, and resilience.

Denby Technical and Preparatory High School is still benefiting from seeing "Precious." We smile, nod and are more aware that we all have a story and experiences that have touched us deeply. Staff members are more aware that some students have had horrendous experiences but still come to school.

There's also a feeling of compassion and understanding that permeates our school body. Forty girls participated in an essay writing contest: "What

makes you precious and what happens in your life to make you forget that you are precious." The contest produced three winners: Avontea Hackworth, Jazzanea Williams, and Artyrce Dickson.

Denby also has formed a support group with the assistance of the staff from The Victims Assistance



Program, which meets regularly.

The following is a poem written by a student:

The Beauty that lies Within Me

By: Ellys'se Davis

I am beautiful, but
Not because of my mocha brown skin, my Chestnut eyes,
Nor the hairstyles I wear.
I am beautiful,
Beautiful inside and out.
Without a trace without a doubt
I am beautiful
Not because of my beautiful smile or
The dimple in my cheek.
It's just the way God made me to be (Beautiful).
I am beautiful because of who I am inside, but
Not because of my reflection in the mirror.
Not because of who he or she may say I am.
Only God can judge me.
He knows how He wants me
And made me to be,
He's the only one that understands me
And loves me for me.
I am beautiful, but
Not because of the way I walk or talk.
I am beautiful because of my personality.
I am beautiful because I say I am.
I am beautiful,
I love me for me and for the beauty
That lies within me.
I am beautiful and precious.

Reading Takes Off At Western High School

Students at Western International High School are benefiting from community members who believe in getting resources straight to the classroom. More than 725 new high-interest books were donated to Western from the Townsend Press, the Ann Arbor Friends Peace and Social Justice Committee, and U.S. Army Colonels Steve (retired) and Barbara Zacharczyk (active duty).

"It's not that difficult," says Lisa Sinnett, bilingual honors teacher (pictured at right). "Townsend Press knows that teachers are spending their own money to supply their classrooms. I just tell everyone I know that the students are really enthusiastic about reading and I ask them if they can donate some books."

"People see this as a way to directly impact students' lives—getting books into the hands of students."

William Bowles, media specialist at Western, says: "The books are flying off the shelves."

Townsend Press prices the new



books at \$1 each, plus shipping. It will even send each school five complete sets of the popular Bluford High series, free of charge. Take a look at www.townsendpress.com.

Oh, and PS: reading increases test scores!

Thinking Like an Engineer at Spain School

By Charlene Uresy, Spain School

Discovering the prospective benefits of engineering makes the Pre-Engineering class at Spain School exciting. This is the second year of the class, founded by seventh-grade math teacher Constance Elliott. The purpose of the class is to introduce students to the different engineering sciences.



Working with the Department of Transportation TRAC program and the Engineering Society of Detroit, the students are building module bridges and will enter them in a state-wide competition in East Lansing on April 12.

This is not their first project. Before the bridge modules, the students had a magnetic

levitation assignment – they made cars that floated on magnetic tires! Not only are the students learning about engineering and having a good time, they are also becoming very familiar with the engineering software program CAD (Computer Added Drafting). With CAD, they are learning the different commands that helps with plotting drawing.

The Pre-Engineering class at Spain is introducing the students to discoveries of the world and how things work. They are learning to think and bring new ideas to the projects they're working on. Learning to think is essential in fostering a good education and at Spain a good selection of classes promotes this thinking.

Helping Kids by Reading to Them in Class

By Ron Seigel

While it is hard for teachers to understand problems children face outside the classroom (particularly with large class sizes that make it difficult to provide individual attention), there are some indirect ways teachers might help youngsters facing rejection or abuse.

In addition to showing students respect, friendliness, concern and appreciation for their good qualities, teachers can help them understand irrational cruelty. They can help troubled children put their own plight in perspective simply by bringing out implications of what they read to them.

Psychiatrist Alice Miller wrote the cruelty faced by heroes and heroines of many fairy tales are unconscious descriptions of family abuse. I suspect such stories might provide insights about rejection by the peer group, abuse in society because of

race, religion or economic group, or as with the story of Simpleton, rejection of those who have not surrendered the creativity of childhood and the ability to see things in original ways.

Miller declared that in early childhood, when “knowledge of the world as it is actually absorbed,” the child “experiences evil in its undisguised form and stores the knowledge in the unconscious.”

Dr. Miller believes that the happy endings in most fairy tales represent psychological denial “which undoes the insight of the truth” that comes from a fairy tale’s description of cruelty. However, I deeply believe the happy endings represent an insight into another truth. While it is indeed true that in the real world, goodness is not always rewarded, it is also true that a child’s immediate environment does not represent the entire world.

A Cinderella mocked by her stepmother and stepsisters and brainwashed into believing she is not good

enough to go to the ball may be appreciated by the prince or a national TV audience. Snow White, whose stepmother is out to kill her, may receive protection and help by caring adults, such as the dwarfs. A young

boy, who is so mocked and labeled by his father and brothers that he is given the name of “Simpleton” may have the wit and originality to expose corruption.

At the very least these happy endings can provide children with a view of how things ought to work and encourage them to keep trying to correct conditions in their own lives and to make society more just.

This can also be done in higher grades. I remember marveling at the tremendous patience of a high school English teacher in dealing with a noisy class. Instead of criticizing them or admonishing them to be quiet, she wisely continued reading from her lesson, a short story called

“The Pin.” Suddenly all the students were completely silent caught up in the conflict between a boy and his father, something that may have reminded them of a conflict they had with their parents.

Another English teacher, the late Mary Rose, who chaired the English Department in West Bloomfield High School, said youngsters have little experience in life, but through literature they can get insights into their problems from wise observers of

many different periods and societies.

Miller might say these writers can help kids confirm, understand, and put into words the insights they already have. At any rate, kids may find these observers in literature better and more interesting guides than what they see in the movies or on television.

Ron Seigel is a freelance writer based in Highland Park, Michigan.



Grants...

Environment

The Captain Planet Foundation supports projects related to protecting the environment that involve children between six and 18. These projects should promote environmental understanding, promote teamwork, and focus on hands-on involvement. Funds from \$250 to \$2,500 are available. Deadline: March 31. For info, visit www.captainplanetfoundation.org.

Presidential Award

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) is the highest award a K-12 teacher can achieve for outstanding teaching in the U.S. This year the science and math award goes to a teacher in grades K-6. The winner receives \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation. Anyone may nominate.

Teachers are encouraged to self-nominate. Deadline: April 1. For info, visit www.paemst.org.

Math and Science

The Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams program awards grants to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics educators for projects involving team of high school students working on creating a specific invention. Grants up to \$10,000 go to winning teams to create inventions that answer a particular need through science, technology, engineering and math. Deadline: April 23. For more info, visit www.inventteams@mit.edu.

Young Educator

ASCD is taking nominations for its Outstanding Young Educator Awards for 2011. The purpose of the awards is to support outstanding young edu-

cators who educate the whole child, demonstrate leadership in their school, and a positive impact on student achievement. The winner will receive \$10,000 as well as an all-expenses paid trip to the ASCD annual conference. Deadline: Aug. 1. For info, visit www.ascd.org/programs.

Students with Disabilities

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF) Inclusion Champion Award honors individuals who have made significant efforts to further the full inclusion of youth with disabilities in society. Eligible winners are those creating a culture of inclusion within an organization or community. The winner will receive a trophy and \$1,000 for a charity of the winner’s choice. Deadline: May 1. For info, visit www.meaf.org/grants-inclusion.php.

Local Heroes

The Jenny Jones Foundation gives away \$2 million to help worthy projects across the nation. Grants up to \$25,000 go to projects that are likely to improve their communities. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit www.jennysheroes.com.

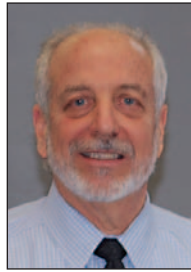
Environment

The Brower Youth Awards honors six young activists for showing leadership in a project with positive environmental or social impact. The award will go to the person who played a leadership role in the project and had the vision and motivation to make the project work. The winner will receive \$3,000 and a weeklong trip to San Francisco for the awards ceremony on Oct. 19. For info, visit www.brower-youthawards.org.

Whose Living Room Is It, Any Way?

By Dave Smokler
Crocket High School

We all know the expression about the elephant in the middle of the living room. The saying refers to a huge problem that has an important impact on our lives and that no one wants to talk about. That elephant is messing up the place but everyone makes believe it’s not there and carefully negotiates around it. The saying implies that the problem should be resolved but no one’s willing to deal with it.



Dave Smokler

We always seem to be on the defensive, just trying to keep hold of what we have. In each one of these battles for survival it’s the same folks that are trying to rip us off, take away our rights, destroy the environment or start a war

against a distant people who we know nothing about. These folks are the ones with more money than they know what to do with. They own and control the corporations and banks and who knows what else.

They are called capitalists because they’ve got all the capital. Their system is called capitalism. We work for them, make barely enough to survive and compete with each other for crumbs from their table. Society tells us that this is a “normal” situation and that anyone who questions it is either “out of the mainstream” or crazy. There is absolutely no public dialogue about kicking that elephant out of our living room and what would be possible if we actually had control of our own home and our own lives.

Harriet Tubman is often quoted as saying: “I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves.” Indeed, psychiatrists once diagnosed

slaves who ran away as having a mental disorder called drapnomania.

Today, there’s nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. We can’t really flee the capitalists. They own virtually everything, control our institutions and are constantly seeking more and more ownership and control. In fact, like the chattel slaves of yesteryear people don’t even believe that they are part of the working class. Somehow they think that if they work hard enough the master will provide what they need or maybe they could be a master too.

But what if we were to reverse the tables? What if we were to take public ownership of the assets of society? What if we were in control? What if we pushed that damn elephant out of our house and cleaned up the place? What if we then walked outside, stood on our front porches and embraced our neighbors who had just done the same thing? How would we recreate the world in our own image?

One of the things we could do would be to rewrite our constitution to guarantee that our government would plan the development of our nation where all of our material and social needs were satisfied, so all of us could thrive as human beings. God knows, with the technology we now have, there doesn’t seem like there’s any reason we couldn’t do that. We could guarantee basic human rights that we don’t enjoy. Just to name a few:

- The right to work.
- The right to relaxation.
- The right to a free education from preschool through university.
- The right to free medical care.
- The right to a comfortable place to live.
- The right to be free from discrimination because of race, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religious beliefs and any other form of discrimination.
- The right to a clean and safe environment.

One thing is clear: until we clean house, that elephant is going to continue to create chaos and make our lives miserable! Let’s begin to envision what life could be like without him. Let’s organize to get him out and create a world that we can live in.

This article was published in the November-December 2009 edition of the People’s Tribune www.peopletribune.org



Union Wins Arbitration for Detroit Teacher

DFT Labor Relations Administrator Judy Smith and attorney Mary Ellen Gurewitz of Sachs Waldman won an arbitration in February for a physical education teacher who was recalled from layoff.

Upon recall, the district forced the teacher to take a new physical exam before being reinstated, which led to procedural concerns. Members are required to take physical exams when they are hired but not when recalled from layoff.

The union filed a grievance and took the case to arbitration. The arbitrator ruled that the collective bargaining agreement was violated and awarded the teacher back pay to January 2009 and immediate reinstatement to his job.

The DFT’s labor relations administrators, pictured above, file these grievances and take up other issues for the membership. They are (from left) Terrence Martin, Karen Whittler, Judy Smith and Merishira Oliver.

The Integrity of the DFT is at Stake

By Lillie Gladney
Renaissance High School Building Rep
DFT Trustee



Lillie Gladney

I am calling upon all DFT members who have been a part of this district and the DFT for many years, who helped to build it up to where it is today – to stand up and speak up for the integrity and dignity of this union.

If you were at Cobo Hall and the last two DFT membership meetings, you witnessed the worst behavior in the history of the DFT. We have worked hard to build the unity of this union and we should not let a few members destroy what past leaders and members have built.

We need to stop this group and let the public and our students see that we can agree to disagree respectfully and follow proper protocol and procedures. I am not saying do not voice your opinion, but do it by recognizing the chair. This group says they know parliamentary procedures, but it only applies when they want to do something.

The bargaining team worked on the contract with what was there. You cannot pull a rabbit out of a hat when there is no rabbit in the hat. DPS is broke (that is a fact) and discussing who to blame is a waste of time. The membership ratified the contract by a clear majority. Now we need to move forward to find ways to educate our students.

Students need to see that we practice what we preach every day in our classrooms. We demand respect from our students because we are the leader. The same rule applies to any group where there is a leader.

I am calling upon all DFT members who are concerned about maintaining the integrity of this union to bind together and stop this destruction led by a few members. As union members, and educators, we need to be informed, respectful and knowledgeable.

Don’t let someone else speak for you. Speak for yourself.



DSA Wins First Place for Student Film

What happens when a teacher reads about a grant, enlists a team of eight teachers, and gets his students to produce a film?

It wins a national first-place award.

A Detroit School of Arts student took home the first place award, \$250, and a trip to Rochester, New York, for a 4-minute film at the 2010 Rochester Institute of Technology Digital Arts, Film and Animation Competition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students.

Matthew Stephens is hearing impaired and starred in the film. But a team of teachers and students in the digital photography class directed, performed the music, and video-graphed the film.

It all started when digital photography teacher John Wood saw a grant opportunity in *The Detroit Teacher*



and got to work.

Eight DSA teachers worked together on producing the film "Midnight Stroll:" John Wood, Clinton Chico, Kim Gagnon, Cheryl Gard, Ron Malabed, Barbara Sanderson, Nakiya Weatherspoon and Ted White.

“To say your kids’ work stands with everyone else in the country is a pretty proud moment,” said Wood.

The film was created from a poem written by DPS graduate Joshua Tuck from ZERO GRAVITY: A Citywide Poets Anthology published by the InsideOut Literary Arts Project in 2006. And the original musical score was written and performed by DSA sophomore Betty Alexandria Pride. More than 35 students worked as videographers, audio technicians, computer graphics designers, editors and photographers.

Student directors Ja’Carr Worthey and Shaniqua Fleming invented a new video computer technique and realized the work that goes into such a major production.

Indeed. The 4-minute film took eight weeks to produce.

“It was fun but it took a lot of time,” Fleming said.



IT TAKES A TEAM – Dozens of students and eight DSA teachers went into the production of an award-winning film: (from left) Clinton Chico, Cheryl Gard, Nakiya Weatherspoon, Ron Malabed, student Matthew Stephens, John Wood, Barbara Sanderson, Kim Gagnon and Ted White.

DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS 2009 DUES FOR TAX PURPOSES	
Full Dues	\$843.62
Three-Quarter Dues	\$632.71
Half Dues	\$421.81
Quarter Dues	\$210.90

Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. Dates and times are subject to change.

MARCH

10

Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.

11

General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

16

Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 p.m.

16

Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

17

Lobby Day in Lansing, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

18

Psychological Services Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

23

Educational Technicians Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m.

APRIL

2-11

Schools Closed, Spring Break

12

Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

13

Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

14

Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.

15

General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

15

Psychological Services Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

20

Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.