

# THE DETROIT teacher

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## The DFT Has a New Home



After a three-year process, the DFT sold its building at 2875 W. Grand Blvd. The DFT moved its offices in February to 7700 Second Avenue, Suite 427. The closing on the sale of the old building is scheduled for March 12.

DFT staff spent two years purging records and downsizing contents to take to the new office. That involved 13,860

gallons of recycling bins and many dumpster loads.

"There's a lot to get rid of when you move from 40,000 square feet to 4,000 square feet," said Mark O'Keefe, DFT controller. O'Keefe oversaw the sale and the move to the new location.

Excess paper and office supplies were given to members during the last two years at membership meetings. More

supplies will be available at upcoming membership meetings, now at the IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott, in Detroit. Meetings are at 4:30 p.m.

"Instead of spending money on a building that's too big for us, we can use our resources to pay down our outstanding debts," O'Keefe said.

He said the new offices, albeit smaller, are more conducive to a productive union. All eight employees are within shouting distance of each other and the computer server, which used to be on a different floor.

Beyond downsizing office space, the DFT has dramatically reduced staff, from 16 full-time employees five years ago to five full-time and three part-time employees today.

"This right-sizing has been in the works for years," he said. "It's a good day for the DFT."



**Mark O'Keefe, DFT controller, and Terrence Martin, DFT labor relations administrator, move boxes to the new building.**

## President's Report



**Keith  
Johnson**

When you walked into the old DFT office there was a picture of President Emerita MaryEllen Riordan addressing about 5,000 DFT members following the negotiation of the first collective bargaining agreement between the DFT and DPS. It was a long, hard fight made possible through the tireless efforts of President Riordan and the DFT members who believed in the cause.

Through her efforts and the support of other labor leaders, MaryEllen was able to get Republican Gov. George Romney to sign into law the right for teachers to have collective bargaining.

This helped set into motion similar laws throughout the nation that finally gave teachers the right to have binding agreements, which articulated their rights, salaries, benefits, working conditions, and responsibilities.

Today, much of what President Riordan and others accomplished has come under relentless assault not only locally, but nationally. Right To Work, the obliteration of tenure rights, and the national anti-teacher, anti-teacher union movement, have compelled the AFT and NEA to work tirelessly to energize their members to engage in the battle to protect the rights of teachers and the right to a quality public education for all children.

No other teacher union has endured more during this time of assault than the DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, YOUR UNION! We suffered from emergency managers, the paring down of our contractual rights, endless court battles AND VICTORIES, closed schools, the proliferation of charter schools, and the establishment of the EAA, which continued the dismantling of DPS and destroyed the fabric of Detroit's public schools.

The greatest challenge today, however, is overcoming the defeatist, apa-

thetic demeanor of our members. Too many have simply given

up. Too many have asked what's the use? Too many have simply accepted that the legislature, the governor, and the EM have all the power so why fight it?

We fight because it is WRONG! We fight because all this relegates our students to an inferior education. We are not able to attract and retain the best teachers because our pay, benefits, working conditions, and environment, already less than desirable, have gotten worse.

We fight because we know to surrender will only allow those who care nothing about us or our profession to privatize public education and install at-will employees.

I continue to fight because I look at that picture of President Riordan before her membership and know what it took to get to that moment. I fight because I have the honor of representing some of the most dedicated professionals one could ever hope to lead.

I fight because when I visit schools I am fortified by the dedication and enthusiasm this membership maintains as it educates children under some of the most dire circumstances.

I fight for the teacher who goes to her car and sees her tires gone. (I also had my tires taken during a school visit). I fight for that teacher who gets no support from the school administrator then is admonished for not maintaining discipline.

I fight because "old school" principals, many of whom I worked, grew up, and took classes with, tell me to keep up the fight. They remember what happened when they lost their right to belong to a union.

I fight for the memory of those who came before me, the men and women in that picture who endured hardships far greater than ours because they had no union protection. They believed in a cause that could cost them THEIR jobs, but would make YOUR jobs possible.

# HELP!!!

It is disappointing to chair a union membership meeting and not even have enough members for a quorum, making it impossible to conduct union business.

Stagnation and apathy are now our greatest adversary.

Nearly every day members ask, "What is the union doing about...?" I talk about actions we are taking, cases we are winning, and strategies we are planning. Then I ask WHAT ARE YOU DOING to help the cause?

Executive Vice-President Edna Reaves and I are the faces of the union because of the leadership positions we occupy. YOU ARE THE STRENGTH! We cannot carry this responsibility on our own, nor should we. WE NEED YOU!

Come to a meeting. Be a building representative. Volunteer for mobilization and action committees. Read the DFT website. Or just come to the office to talk about an idea you have and let's see if we can do something with it.

Some members say they are afraid of what could happen to them if they get involved with THEIR UNION. They should be more afraid of what happens IF THEY DON'T!

I NEED HELP. And it will only come from YOU!

**THE DETROIT**  
teacher

The Detroit Teacher is the official publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, American Federation of Teachers Local 231, AFL-CIO. Member of the Union Teacher Press Association, International Labor Press Association & Michigan Labor Press.

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## Updates . . .

### Have You Given Your \$10?

COPE, the political action arm of the DFT and AFT Michigan, set a goal to raise \$20,000 by the end of the school year. The money is being raised to help elect candidates in November in state offices who support the work of public school teachers and staff.

COPE chair Ivy Bailey is asking \$10 from each DFT member to make that happen.

Of course larger contributions are always welcome. The funds are desperately needed to stop the barrage of attacks on teachers, unions and public schools from the right-wing governor and legislature.

Checks should be made to AFT Michigan COPE, and sent to AFT Michigan at 2661 E. Jefferson, Detroit MI 48207, or dropped off at the DFT office, 7700 Second Ave. Suite 427, Detroit, MI 48202.

### Happy 83rd Birthday to the DFT

On Feb. 24, 1931, a feisty band of Detroit teachers, ignoring threats of reprisals from the school administration, was awarded a charter as the Detroit Federation of Teachers Local 231. The DFT celebrates this major milestone every year at its February membership meeting. Detroit teachers Danita Holimon from Detroit Collegiate Prep @ Northwestern High School and Lenore Ellery from Jerry L. White Center cut the cake at the Feb. 13 membership meeting to celebrate the 83rd birthday of the incorporation of the DFT.



# Spread the Word to End the Word

By Marcus Walton  
DFT Executive Board Member

March 5, 2014 is national “Spread the Word to End the Word” day. What is that? In case you’ve never heard of this national moment, “Spread the Word to End the Word” is an on-going effort to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the word “retard(ed)” and encourage people to pledge to stop using the R-word.



Marcus Walton

The campaign is intended to get schools, communities and organizations to rally and pledge their support to help create communities of inclusion and acceptance for all people.

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” If only this childhood rhyme were true, children would never suffer emotional harm when some thoughtless person hurls insults at them. The truth of the matter is that words do matter. Words should be a source of encouragement especially the words used in school.

When did calling a person retarded become a bad thing? Language is continually evolving. The word mental retard was used in the 20th century to describe individuals who may have the following characteristics:

- 1) IQ below 70
- 2) Delays in language development
- 3) Poor memory skills
- 4) Limited problem solving skills
- 5) Difficulty performing self-care skills.

In the 21st century, the correct terminology is “intellectual disability.” Calling a child or anyone “retard” is hurtful. Why? The intent by some people who use this word is to belittle the intelligence of the person the word “retard” is directed toward.

Teachers can encourage their students to use “people first language” when talking to a person with a disability. People First Language respectfully puts the person before the disability and the idea that a person with a disability is more similar to people without disabilities than different.

So what can teachers and students do to help? They can use social media and take the pledge to never use the R-word at [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org).

And always remember to treat others the way that you would like to be treated.

We're on  
**Facebook!**

Check us out at

[www.facebook.com/DFT231](http://www.facebook.com/DFT231)

# THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS



## Burton International:

# Thank You for the Books

Demetria Hoskins, a kindergarten teacher at Burton International Academy, gave a hearty thanks to the DFT and sister unions for providing over 40,000 free books to Detroit children.

"We wanted to thank First Books, The AFT and DFT for the free books," Hoskins said. "I gave them out today. Thank you!"

"Burton International kindergarten students from room 115 appreciate you!"

The DFT worked with the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals and the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees (together known as AFT Detroit), the AFT and First Book to get the free books. First Book is a non-profit organization that collects surplus books from publishers and re-distributes them to children in need.

Detroit's truck of books arrived on Jan. 25 and the books were distributed to Detroit teachers from the Parade Company warehouse.

## Free Books Worth the Saturday Trip in a Snowstorm

Teachers from Henderson Academy understood the importance of increasing literacy when they showed up in a snowstorm early Saturday morning Jan. 25 to enrich the lives of their students by providing them with a few books from the DFT, AFT Detroit and First Book for their libraries at home.

"It is easy to continually ask students to read for 20 to 30 minutes each night, but many of them do not have the resources at home to fulfill this request," said Ebony Douglas-Armstrong, a Henderson teacher.

However, many students on both the elementary and middle school level were delighted to select from a variety of free books they can use for several purposes.

"As a second grade teacher, I allowed my students to take home an anthology that they could use to read a plethora of stories each night to increase their reading fluency," Douglas-Armstrong said.

"Students were allowed to select an additional book that could be used for guided reading, silent sustained reading, or just plain old leisure reading," she said. "Students seem to be more eager and interested in reading when they are allowed to make choices and are provided with material that sparks their interest, is grade level equivalent, and meets their zone of proximal development reading level."

In January, the DFT teamed up with the AFT, local DPS unions, and First Book to provide more than 40,000 free books to DPS students.



**Henderson teacher Ebony Douglas-Armstrong with her free books.**



# THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS

## Taking the Classroom to the Food Bank

The second-graders at Ronald Brown Academy spent the month of February packing food for Gleaners Food Bank.

Counselor Dieatra Jones wrote a grant through the Detroit Public Schools science department for three second-grade classes to take a field trip to Gleaners. The photo above shows Valerie Reed's second-graders, who spent Feb. 14 touring Gleaners, learning about healthy plates, and packing enough food for 75 classrooms.

Reginald Williams, the school's Kids Helping Kids coordinator, assisted Reed's class. Reed's students said they enjoyed learning the value of helping others and felt it was a great way to spend Valentine's Day.

## Learning the Role of a Canine Unit

The students chairs slid back when Maximus, a German Shepherd police dog, stepped into their classroom at Drew Transition Center on Feb. 6.



**Detroit Police Officer Leslie Whitfield and police dog Maximus.**

Maximus and his leader, Detroit Police Officer Leslie Whitfield, were invited to teach the post-secondary special education students of Marta Lazar, Melzitta Davis and MaryAnn Andrecovich about the purpose of a canine unit.

The highly trained police dog is a native of Slovakia and has been in training in Detroit for over three years. Part of his work is enlightening students, usually K-8, about the work of a canine unit.

"Maximus is also an officer," Whitfield explained. And he knows

when he is at work, as opposed to home. He lives with Whitfield.

"He knows when he gets in the police car, he has to work," Whitfield said.

"Our job is to detect bombs," she said, adding that 40 percent of a dog's brain is geared toward smell.

"Their sense of smell is really high compared to a human," she said.

The shepherd also is trained to find people hiding in buildings or alleys. Maximus can do that by tracing the skin cells that are shed by people as they move.

"He's so used to going in buildings and finding things, that's what he wants to do," she said.

Ahead of time, Whitfield hid something in teacher Marta Lazar's classroom. Maximus promptly found it and was rewarded with a treat. As he was searching, students moved a little closer together.



**Students at Drew Transition Center learn about the canine unit of the Detroit Police Department.**

# DPS Offers New Severance Incentive

By Patrick Falcusan  
DFT Retirement Counselor

On Feb. 28, DPS announced a new severance plan for DFT members entitled the Employee Severance Plan (ESP). Eligible members will be mailed an information packet in the next few days. This plan is much improved over last year's plan.

The new severance plan addresses concerns the DFT expressed regarding last year's plan. Specifically, in addition to participants receiving 60 percent of their 2013-14 base annual salary (60 percent of: BA, step 10 = \$33,659; MA, step 10 = \$39,159; MA+30, step 11 = \$39,579; Dr., step 11 = \$39,759), the new plan will:

- Allow ample time for participants to review their retirement and resignation options.
- Pay participants the TIP money owed them (\$9,000 for most members).
- Pay participants who retire the sick day payout monies owed them. (The first 100 sick days are worth \$45 each and the next 100 are worth \$65 for a maximum of \$11,000).

Last year's plan allowed for none of these three items mentioned above.

Many of our members should consider giving serious consideration to participating in the plan, especially those members who:

- Were almost certain they wanted to resign at the end of this school year.
- Were almost certain they wanted to retire at the end of this school year.
- Have Basic, are over age 55, have 30 or more years of service credit, and were thinking of retiring in the next few years.
- Have MIP, are over age 46, have 30 or more years of service credit, and were thinking of retiring in the next few years.
- Have Basic or MIP, are over age 60, have 20 or more years of service credit,

and were thinking of retiring in the next few years.

Almost all of the members outlined in the categories above who retire and take the ESP will bring home more money by retiring than working.

There are other members who are over age 55, but under 60, have more than 15 years of service credit, but under 30 years, who would be entitled to an early reduced pension (if they worked at least 17 days in each of the last five school years or worked at least 90 days in each of the last two school years). They might also consider taking the ESP — especially those who would qualify for Social Security in five years when the ESP payments ended.

Also there are members over age 60 with at least 10 years of service credit who might also consider taking the ESP.

Anyone considering taking the ESP and retiring should:

- Make absolutely sure they are eligible to retire (The ESP does not change the retirement system's rules on being eligible to retire and to begin receiving a pension.)
- Discuss their decision with their family and a trusted financial advisor. (Retirement is a major life-changing decision).

- Attend the group informational sessions offered by EPC. (Educators Preferred Corporation [EPC] has been contracted by DPS to administer ESP.)
- Attend the individual counseling sessions offered by EPC. (Call 1-800-747.1504 or go to [epcinternet.com/dps](http://epcinternet.com/dps).)
- Go to their miAccount with the retirement system to get an accurate number for their years of service credit and to get an estimate of what their pension would be. (The years of service credit provided to EPC by DPS are sometimes in error).
- Add their pension amount (less taxes and the cost of healthcare) to their ESP amount (less taxes) and compare that figure to their current bring home pay.

The period to participate is March 11, 2014 through April 28, 2014, but members must complete and submit the confidential data sheet from their ESP packet by March 5, 2014. (The instructions on how to do so are in the packets.)

If there are still questions, call or email me (313.875.6783 or [pfcusan@dft231.com](mailto:pfcusan@dft231.com)). I no longer have regular office hours so it is best to call or email me. If you email me, include a home or cell phone number in your message.



Patrick Falcusan

## Detroiters Rally to Retire Snyder

As Gov. Rick Snyder launched his re-election campaign, dozens of protesters called for his retirement at a Feb. 2 rally in Detroit. While corporations and CEOs enjoyed a \$1.8 billion tax cut from Snyder and Republicans, taxes for middle class families only increased, and massive new retirement taxes were instituted on seniors.

The protesters, organized by the Michigan AFL-CIO, let Snyder know he won't be able to rebrand his bad behavior. Under Snyder, Michigan's unemployment rate is one of the worst in the nation, and Bridge Magazine ranks our state 49th in projected job growth.

Protesters gathered in frigid temps at the corner of West Fort and Clark Street to say, enough is enough. Rick Snyder is not working for Michigan families or the middle class. He needs to retire.



# Grants . . .

## Supporting Math

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics through the Michigan Education Trust supports pre-service math teachers who engage in research to improve the teaching of math. The research should be conducted as a collaboration between university faculty, pre-service teachers, and classroom teachers who want to improve the teaching of math. Funds up to \$3,000 are available. Deadline: May 2, 2014. For info, visit [nctm@nctm.org](mailto:nctm@nctm.org).

## Music Activities

The Music is Revolution Foundation sponsors mini-grants for teachers who want to provide quality music education for their students. Grants are for music education through musical experience that introduce students to a sense of their social, academic and cultural identity. Grants up to \$500 are available. Deadline: April 15, 2014. For info, visit [grants@musicrevolution.com](mailto:grants@musicrevolution.com).

## Video Contest

A video contest inviting entries from teams and individuals from six categories was created for the 50th anniversary of the National Academy of Engineering. The NAE asks what engineering will uncover in the next 50 years and participants will create a video imagining what will be created to enhance life on Earth. Prizes from \$5,000 to \$25,000 are available. Deadline: March 31, 2014. For info, visit [E4Uvideocontest@nae.edu](mailto:E4Uvideocontest@nae.edu).

## Innovative Teaching

The Braitmayer Foundation supports innovative teaching practices and is interested in curricular and school reform initiatives and professional development opportunities for teachers. Applicants must submit a two-page letter of inquiry. Grants up to \$10,000 are available. Deadline: March 15, 2014. For info, visit [www.braitmayerfoundation.org/guidelines](http://www.braitmayerfoundation.org/guidelines).

## Seed Grants

Do Something provides weekly seed grants for young people interested in starting a community action project. Funds of \$500 are available. For info, visit [www.dosomething.org/grants/seed-grants](http://www.dosomething.org/grants/seed-grants).

## Psychology

The American Psychological Foundation seeks to strengthen the study of psychology by high school students through grants that support relevant projects. The APF seeks to nurture the next generation of psychologists and supports projects that align with these goals. Grants up to \$20,000 are available. Deadline: May 1, 2014. For info, visit [www.apa.org/apf/funding/pre-college.aspx](http://www.apa.org/apf/funding/pre-college.aspx).

# How Do You Teach a Student Who Isn't There?

By **Mark O'Keefe**  
DFT Controller

One of the frustrations classroom teachers experience is not being able to get a child evaluated for placement in Special Education because of poor attendance.

The people who make the rules decided that if a child misses more than 30 days of school per year, the testing would not be able to determine the cause of any variance from the expected results.



**Mark O'Keefe**

A low score could be the result of a learning disability, but it also could be because the student was absent too often.

Whoever made these rules should spend some time with the people who are developing the teacher evaluation tool. By law, a significant portion of teacher evaluation now must be based on student performance. The question is: which students should be included?

If missing 30 days of school makes it impossible to accurately determine if a child's lack of progress is due to a learning disability or poor attendance, how can we determine if that same student's results were due to ineffective teaching or poor attendance?

Similar problems occur when measuring progress for students who move into your class midyear. How do you measure growth unless you take a base line test every time you get a new student?

**I propose that teacher evaluations only include the student achievement component for students who were present for at least 150 days of instruction from that teacher.**

After all, you cannot be an effective teacher to students who aren't there.

# SCANDAL OFFERS BEST LESSONS ON AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

By William Bowles  
Western International High School

Good morning civics teachers: there's been a curriculum change. No more textbooks, those lumbering compendiums of bland "received wisdom" penned by committees of scholars and vetted by state legislators to filter anything resembling excitement, intrigue or controversy.

Maybe you've already hacked your way through the weeds of the sordid textbook business by reading "Lies My Teacher Told Me," by James Loewe. Don't worry. Beginning today, our new text will be *Scandal*, the hit ABC drama starring Kerry Washington.



Kerry Washington

*Scandal* throws into high relief several critical issues students need to know about how the world works: abuse of power, the myth of a post-racial America, the outsized role of money, election rigging, cyber security and eavesdropping, and rapidly eroding checks and balances in our government, all but omitted in our

anodyne classroom texts.

*Scandal*, along with a slew of like-minded dramas set in Washington, D.C. (think *House of Cards*), stands at the apex of a genre of dramas that could be called "Beltway Porn." These shows depict power and raw ambition in the upper echelons of the U.S. government: no act is too violent or reprehensible to achieve power. These multiple plot-line dramas have supplanted cops and robbers, CSI-type shows. They portray the unhinged, flagrant self-serving modus operandi of Washington power brokers.

And with power comes scandal: sex, murder, embezzlement; all the elements of titillating drama. But wait, here comes Olivia Pope, the ultimate Washington insider, known as a "fixer" of scandals. She and her team will "handle it."

Olivia is young, smart, powerful and black. She is consulted by everyone rich and powerful who is in a jam, especially the milquetoast President Grant, her amour, whom she helped elect with her cohorts: Cyrus Beene, the president's chief of staff, Mellie, the first lady, Supreme Court Justice Verna Thornton and powerful business mogul Hollis Doyle. They conspired to rig the election by using bogus electronic voting machines that switched the votes in a swing district. We might direct our students to the similar electronic vote rigging scandal in the 2000 and 2004 elections in Florida using voting machines made by Diebold, and told in the 2006 documentary, *Hacking Democracy*.

President Grant and his close advisors attain and hold on to power by any means. Take the character Cyrus Beene, President Grant's chief of staff. Beene tells Mellie, the first lady: "You are a political animal, but I am a monster." Beene frequently contracts to have enemies murdered by calling Charlie, an alumnus of the shadowy agency B613, headed by Olivia's father.

"I could have been running Harvard," Beene laments, on a difficult day. A real-life counterpart to Beene is Lawrence Summers, President Obama's chief economic advisor for the first 18 months of his presidency. When Summers left the Obama administration in 2010 to run Harvard, his arrogance, sexism and racism sparked outrage by many Harvard professors, and he was forced to resign. Foremost among his egregious blunders was to announce that women are inherently incapable of conducting scientific research.

A closer look at the Obama White House during that time shows that Summers and the actual chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, accelerated Bush II's neocon, free market economic agenda despite taking office during the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, and blatantly disregarded Obama's mildly progressive policy initiatives. No serious financial regulation would take place under Summers' watch.

Summers was also the most aggressive goon President Clinton employed to help repeal FDR-era financial regulation that led to the Great Recession. And with the hawkish Emanuel at the helm, there would be no reigning in Israel's illegal construction of housing in the West Bank, effectively shutting down any meaningful path to a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians, and further stoking tensions in the Middle East.

The impotence of modern-day heads of state — charismatic front men acting as managers of corporate, military and financial powers — should alarm us and be a call to action.

The lesson for students: The president, although endowed with legal "the buck stops here" authority, exercises little influence in making and carrying out policy. Those tasks have long been outsourced to think tanks, lobbyists (Hollis Doyle) and advisors.

*Scandal* and *House of Cards* help us see the entire enterprise of electing a president for the sham that is: a marketing campaign that accentuates the superficial above anything of sub-





# SCANDAL OFFERS BEST LESSONS ON AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

stance. The signature publication of the advertising business, Advertising Age, honored President Obama as Marketer of the Year in 2008. Brand Obama all the way.

In the fall of 2012, my students asked me for whom I would vote for president. “Jill Stein,” I said.

“I mean for president,” they pressed.

“Jill Stein,” I repeated. She’s from the Green Party. Blank stares.

Stein was handcuffed and detained for four hours when she tried to attend (not speak at) a presidential debate at Hofstra University in October 2012. Even her presence was disallowed. The platform of the Green Party calls for efforts to reduce global warming. This stand is, apparently, intolerable in beltway Washington, where meaningful policy discussions are either marginalized or lambasted as the crazed fulminations of the hysterical fringe.

In Scandal, the media are portrayed accurately: as lapdogs for the official Washington line. When a journalist gets out of line, as does Beene’s husband, James, when digging into the Cytron vote rigging scheme, he is muzzled by the White House in a flurry of dramatic plot twists.

Olivia’s father heads B613, a division of the CIA specializing in assassinations. We can project that this shadowy security apparatus sits near the top of a pyramid of other secret agencies, such as the FBI and the National Security Agency (NSA), whose vast sweeping of domestic and global personal information is now public, courtesy of Edward Snowden, former NSA contractor now living in asylum in Russia.

In Scandal, Olivia’s father, Rowan, has been endowed with unrestricted power, influence and money; so much so, that he pulls the strings of the president himself. Well, welcome to our national security state. J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI held the same sway over presidents and everyone else for decades. The CIA and NSA stand out in a network of 19 or more spy agencies in our government, all of whose budgets are classified. Untold billions of tax dollars have been poured into them over the years. This should provoke a discussion among our students on the need for security, its constitutional overreach, the implications for privacy and the clear danger of a surveillance net so vast and reaching. Could Orwell have imagined the Big Brother of today?

A lot could be written about the character of Olivia Pope and the popularity of Scandal with respect to race and the ascendancy of black characters in media dramas. Could Scandal have been a hit in pre-Obama America?

Although blacks occupy many positions of power and status in Scandal, they cling to their cocoon of insular elitism. Not a Rosa Parks figure among them. The black democratic majority

leader of the Senate, Edison Davis, pursues a conservative agenda. Indeed, one can barely detect differences in ideology or policy between the parties, just as in real life, and just what our students need to be taught. If democracy is to work at all, the Washington of Scandal and House of Cards — and that of Washington, D.C. — must be made to adhere to law. Olivia’s father is not working to improve civil rights of minorities. The elite black power brokers do nothing to change the power arrangements in Washington. There is no movement toward a more equal society.



According to Josh Bassett, Professor of American Studies and Director of the Institute for Social Progress at Wayne County Community College, in Detroit, the assimilation of minorities to high

office by the conservative

power base “maintains the illusion of a post-racial society.” It makes “concessions of power (to minorities) to maintain an overall framework of power.” Good going, Scandal. You got it right.

The view of our government in Scandal and House of Cards can be insightfully complimented with an outstanding book by Stephen Kinzer: *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War.* Kinzer delivers a breathtaking narrative that shows how John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State during the Eisenhower years, and his brother, Allen Dulles, who headed the CIA, fomented war and wreaked havoc in several countries, and took down governments at will with the full backing of their president. Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia and Cuba all suffered at their discretion, and in the interests of their corporate clients at legendary law titan Sullivan & Cromwell, who represented then, and represents now, the most powerful corporations and people around the globe.

For us adults, perhaps talk about Scandal and House of Cards will provoke comparisons to the frightening dismantling of our democracy that we can and should share with our students.

*Juniors and seniors can learn how to “read visual media as a text” in the American Studies course at Wayne County Community College. Taught by Professor Josh Bassett, this is a free 3-credit dual enrollment college humanities course. Classes are held at the downtown campus of WCCC one day a week for two hours after school. For enrollment information, send your name and email address to Josh Bassett, American Studies, at [Jbasset2@wcccd.edu](mailto:Jbasset2@wcccd.edu).*

## Calendar for Election of Delegates to 2014 AFT & AFT Michigan Conventions

**Feb. 13, 2014: MEMBERSHIP MEETING:** Nominating procedures and schedule of appropriate dates are announced. Announcement of elections posted on website and sent to schools.

**Feb. 13, 2014: OPEN NOMINATIONS:** Nominations and acceptances may be mailed to the DFT office, 7700 Second Ave., Suite 427, Detroit, MI 48202 OR hand delivered to the DFT office during office hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

**Feb. 28, 2014: CLOSE NOMINATIONS:** Nominations and acceptances mailed or hand delivered before 5 p.m. to the DFT office.

**March 3, 2014: UNOFFICIAL LIST** of candidates mailed to schools, home of candidates, and posted in DFT office ad on DFT website.

**March 6, 2014: DEADLINE** for filing grievances regarding nominations and acceptances. ELECTION COMMITTEE hears grievances if any. EXECUTIVE BOARD hears grievance appeals from Election Committee decisions if any.

**March 13, 2014: MEMBERSHIP** hears grievance appeals if any.

**March 17, 2014: OFFICIAL LIST** of candidates sent to schools, candidates, and posted on DFT website.

**March 25-28, 2014: VOTING.**

**March 31, 2014:** Results posted on DFT website, in DFT office, and sent to schools.

**Candidate's Eligibility Date:  
February 13, 2013**

**Voter's Eligibility Date:  
February 13, 2014**

## Regular Election for Four Election Committee Members

*FOR TWO-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE:  
MARCH 2014 TO MARCH 2016*

**Feb. 13, 2014: OPEN NOMINATIONS:** Nominations and acceptances may be mailed to the DFT office, 7700 Second Ave., Suite 427, Detroit, MI 48202 OR hand delivered to the DFT office during office hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

**Feb. 28, 2014: CLOSE NOMINATIONS:** Nominations and acceptances at 5 p.m. mailed or hand delivered to Election Committee at the DFT office.

**March 3, 2014:** List of candidates mailed to schools, homes of nominees, and posted in the DFT office.

**March 6, 2014: DEADLINE FOR GRIEVANCES** regarding nominations. ELECTION COMMITTEE hears grievances if any. EXECUTIVE BOARD hears grievances if any.

**March 13, 2014: MEMBERSHIP** hears grievances if any, and votes on decisions. VOTING BEGINS IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

**IF THERE ARE NO GRIEVANCES**, voting will begin at 4 p.m. Those in line at 5:30 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

**Candidate's Eligibility Date: Feb. 13, 2013**

**Voter's Eligibility Date: Feb. 13, 2014**

All Meetings start at 4:30 p.m. Dates and times are subject to change.

### March

- 6** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.  
(7700 Second Ave., Suite 427, Detroit, 48211)
- 13** Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.  
(IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott, East of Trumbull)
- 18** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.  
(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd.)
- 27** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.  
(7700 Second Ave., Suite 427, Detroit, 48211)

### April

- 3** Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.  
(IBEW Hall, 1358 Abbott, East of Trumbull)
- 15** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.  
(Triumph Church, 2760 E. Grand Blvd.)
- 18-25** Spring break (schools closed)
- 28** Schools reopen