

**Please join us for our
January Faculty Rep
Meetings**

Tuesday, January 27
4:15 PM, Dobson Ranch Inn,
1666 S. Dobson Rd.
(Dobson/US 60)

Wednesday, January 28
4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's
6465 E. Southern Ave.
(Power/Southern)

Please RSVP by Friday,
January 23, to Heather at
833-8400, ext. 101 or to
heather.tanner@arizonaea.org

*We welcome ALL members to join
us at either meeting and hope to
see you there!*



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January 14, 2009

Volume XL, Number 7

A New Year, A New Me

By Kirk Hinsey, MEA President



Last year at this time, we made resolutions to lose weight, exercise more, and pay more attention to our profession. How many did we keep? Are we thinner? More fit? Do we know what is happening in our profession?

These are tough questions in tough times. I hope that everyone found the time for themselves last year and lost the weight, got fit, and participated in the many opportunities to improve their profession. It is never easy and takes time, energy, and passion to accomplish those goals.

In this month's Record, I have asked my Executive Board to share their stories and reasons for belonging to MEA. Please take the time to reflect on their messages and see how they feel they are impacting their profession. Being a member and belonging is only the first step to improving education.

An easy way to get involved is during the week of **March 2** and our annual Read Across America celebration. Elementary schools will kick off the week with green eggs and ham for breakfast. The week culminates with a party with the Cat in the Hat. What are you going to do in your classrooms to celebrate literacy and Read Across America?

Thank you for your continued support and I hope to see many of you as Bargaining begins on **Monday, February 9 at 4:00 PM** at the Stapley Boardroom.

Why I am an MEA Member

By Martin Haub, Mesa High School

Professional organizations, businesses, governments, and even this school district have public relations divisions. Teachers should too. There are so many issues confronting schools and teachers, and it takes a lot of time to constantly write to legislators, write letters to the editor, call education leaders, and so on, not to mention keeping up with all the laws and budgetary items that affect us.

That's why I belong: MEA and AEA speak for me at the local and state level. They also keep me informed about what is going on, and what I need to be aware of. I may not always agree with some of the positions of either organization (the NEA even less so!), but it's still important that someone who has the time and resources speaks up for the classroom teacher. That's why we should all support the MEA and get involved.

Read more testimonials from our Executive Board Members on Page 2

"Why I am an MEA Member"

Last month, we asked members of our Executive Board to share why MEA is important to them or why they belong. Hopefully their responses will inspire you to join (if you are not yet a member), or ask a colleague to join. Or maybe they will inspire you to share why being an MEA Member is important to YOU! If you would like to share your thoughts with us, send them to Heather at the MEA Office via district mail, or to heather.tanner@arizonaea.org. You may see your response on our website or in a future issue of *The Record*!

I am a member of the Mesa Education Association for the same reason doctors join the American Medical Association, lawyers join the American Bar Association, and other professionals join their respective organizations. It is the right thing to do and the best way to learn about and advocate for your profession. I have learned a great deal about public education in Arizona and some of it has been disillusioning. I have seen firsthand how the MEA, AEA, and NEA have worked to improve public education for students as well as for teachers. Some feel that these organizations do little for public education, but that is because they have not taken the time to go to a meeting, join a committee, go to Education Day at the Capital, or even join the association. The more involved I have become, the more I have learned about what and who affects our profession, that is why I am currently an MEA board member and why I attend meetings, join committees and speak to legislators and senators in person and by email. After learning what I have through MEA, I can no longer just sit by and do nothing.

Shirley Thomas, Westwood High

There are numerous reasons that I think membership in Mesa Education Association is important to me. First off, I think it's important to belong to professional organizations that support education. MEA does a tremendous job of keeping members informed and provides trainings to keep us up to date on upcoming trends that are impacting our campuses. The MEA/MESPA bargaining teams provide leaders willing to represent all teachers by addressing tough issues that not only concern educational delivery but also address the need for those in our profession to be treated fairly, respectfully, and in a professional manner.

Wayne Manske, Field Elementary

What does my membership mean to me? Simply stated – being a professional. Professional educators do not sit idly by. Professional educators get involved, and are prepared to speak out against those forces which seek to destroy our public education system. Professional educators believe that state leaders who proudly announce that being 49th nationally in per pupil funding is adequate deserve to be unmasked, confronted and defeated. Professional educators speak out for our students, our schools, and our profession. I am proud to be a professional educator, and I am proud to be a member of my professional association!

Mike Conway, Kino Jr. High

I serve on the MEA Executive Board because I value the political work our association does on behalf of children in Mesa who deserve fair and equitable public education. Politicians decide what we teach, how long the school day will be, how much funding schools will receive, class sizes, the school calendar, our working conditions, etc. I volunteered for MEA because I could no longer sit by and let non-educators make poor decisions that affect my students. I had to stand up for what I believe is right for kids, teachers, and support staff. As I became more involved, I began to understand that our association is so much more than advocacy. MEA provides professional development opportunities, a tutor bank, a scholarship fund for Mesa students who want to become teachers, mentorship and support for new teachers, and we actively participate in NEA's Read Across America. I am proud of the work I have done for this association and to serve with the inspiring educators on the Executive Board who have become a family to me.

Kathy Ray, Mendoza/O'Connor

I belong to MEA because I am the child of two educators, and I grew up knowing about the "EA" and understanding that this organization helped to take care of my parents as professionals. Belonging to a nationally and locally recognized education association is just something that feels right to me. Besides the fun service discounts, the comfort of having an organizational consultant when I need guidance, and district bargaining rights, the reason why I am a member is simply because it makes sense. The value I feel in being an MEA member comes from the tradition of beliefs that have been passed onto me from my parents...a couple of hard working teachers!

Jennifer Tellez-Carson, Keller/Lincoln

I first became a member of MEA because I felt it was the right, professional thing to do. At that time, I was content being an average-Joe member, until someone asked me to get more involved and become a faculty representative. What an eye-opening experience! Now, I have a much stronger sense of the intricacies involved in developing a successful classroom. It takes active involvement in the community and political worlds to ensure every student receives a quality education. I am a better teacher because of my involvement and have had the privilege of working with outstanding teachers all over the country because of it.

Tiffany Bunstein, Dobson High



MEA Record

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www.mesateachers.org

AEA Education Day at the Capitol

It is always a question of "How can I get involved and have a voice in my profession?"

One of the highlights of the spring is AEA's Education Day at the Capitol. This year, teams of teachers, administrators, and concerned citizens for education will go to the Capitol on Wednesday, March 4, to share our stories and talk with legislators.



I invite each of you to make a commitment to do something to ensure education is not cut too deeply in this budget year.

To sign up to attend Education Day at the Capitol on **Wednesday, March 4**, or for more information, call the office at 480-833-8400, ext. 101

Need to reduce clutter in your school mail box? Interested in "Going Green" to help save the planet? Then sign up to receive the MEA *Record* in your **home** email each month! Simply return the form below, and it will be sent to your **personal** e-mail address each month. **Remember, we are NOT allowed to send MEA communications via the District e-mail system.** You can opt to receive the *Record* only via e-mail, or an e-mail copy in addition to a paper copy. (If you just want a paper copy, like now, then do nothing - you will continue to receive it as normal.)

And don't forget - you can always view the MEA *Record* online at www.mesateachers.org/MEARecord.htm

Please send me the MEA *Record* via e-mail!
I DO NOT want a paper copy each month.

Please send me the MEA *Record* via e-mail!
I would also like a paper copy each month.

Name: _____

School/Site: _____

PERSONAL e-mail address: _____

MEA Calendar of Events January - February 2009



January 16 - 18:

NEA Western States Leadership Conference

Monday, January 19:

Martin Luther King Day, No School

Tuesday, January 27:

West Side Faculty Rep Meeting, 4:15 PM, Dobson Ranch Inn, 1666 S. Dobson Rd. (Dobson/US 60)

Wednesday, January 28:

East Side Faculty Rep Meeting, 4:15 PM, Mi Amigo's, 6465 E. Southern Rd. (Power/Southern)

Tuesday, February 3:

Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 PM, MEA Office

Wednesday, February 4:

MEA/MESPA Rep Training Session, 5 PM, Painted Mountain Golf Resort, 6210 E. McKellips Rd.

Monday, February 9:

First Meet/Confer Session, 4 PM, Stapley Board Room

Tuesday, February 10:

Cat in the Hat Party entries due at MEA Office by 5 PM

Thursday, February 12:

MEA/MESPA Rep Training Session, 5 PM, Mardenely's (formerly Rigatony's), 223 E. Brown Rd.

The MEA Calendar is also available online at
www.mesateachers.org/Calendar.htm