

Pension changes at O'Brien Legislative Conference

On Saturday, February 24, four PEA members attended the Walter J. O'Brien Legislative and Political Action Conference along with about five hundred other teachers from throughout the state. Those who attended were Association Representative Sue Brooks, WCEA Treasurer and Government Relations Committee member Mike Kruczek, WCEA President Carol Mertz and Vice-president Doug Morris.

After the opening session, attendees went to different discussion meetings. Warren County was grouped with parts of Bergen and Middlesex, Hudson, Hunterdon and Somerset counties. Legislators attending that session were Senators Bernard Kenny, Robert Smith and Assembly persons Leonard Lance and Loretta Weinberg.

The main areas of discussion were the



introduction of legislation to change the retirement formula from N/60 to N/55, a \$40,000 starting salary, vouchers and privatization.

For the most part Kenny, Smith and Weinberg supported the NJEA proposed legislation on changing the retirement formula, vouchers,

ESP attendance at state conference

On March 2nd, 3rd and 4th, Matty Pokrivchak, Marilyn Shober and Elaine Strahle attended the NJEA Educational Support Professions' Conference held at the East Brunswick Hilton in East Brunswick, NJ.

They attended a Legal and Ethical Issues for Paraeducators Seminar, which helped us to understand and deal with issues we encounter on a daily basis. We explored the implications on students, other school staff and ourselves.

We also attended a Negotiations Seminar and learned how to master the essential phases of negotiating with emphasis on organization and preparation.

One of the main highlights of the weekend was the presentation

ing salary (not necessarily \$40,000).

Leonard Lance was the exception as he disagreed with NJEA Lobbyist Wayne Dibofsky's position that the TPAF would recoup the \$6 billion dollar loss in the last quarter in 2000 by the end of February, 2001. His attitude was wait and see how the stock market would perform before supporting the change.

Lance is extremely important since he chairs the state's budget committee. Lance also supported vouchers on an experimental basis in Jersey City, but not necessarily on a statewide basis and he vacillated on privatization.

of the NJEA's annual Educational Support Professional of the Year Award. The award emphasizes the contributions of our ESP members to their schools and communities. This year's award went to Gail



Horton, a Crisis Intervention Assistant at Bergen County Special Services School.

The ESP nominee from

Phillipsburg was Edna Seifert, a secretary at the high school, who was also acknowledged at the ceremony. NJEA President Michael Johnson and Vice-President Edie Fulton presented the award and congratulated the nominees.

NJEA presents the Educational Support Professionals Award to an NJEA member whose activities reflect the contributions of educational support professionals to public education. The purpose of the award is to recognize an individual who shows outstanding accomplishments in various areas in the education community.

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President: John Pokrivchak Middle School	Vice-President: Doug Morris High School	Treasurer: Barbara Alderfer Middle School	Recording Secretary: Debbie Carty Freeman School	Corresponding Secretary: Linda Snyder Andover-Morris
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President's Letter

These days, when you read the newspaper or watch the news on television, it is almost a certainty that the topic of violence will appear. We sometimes grow accustomed to violence that takes place in another country or some other part of the United States. We are alarmed only when violence hits close to home or affects our friends and family. Unfortunately, our children and students are exposed to the same violent acts that we hear about each day. While they may not pay as much attention to the news, they get their daily dose of violence from TV and video games. In short, they see it as something remote, entertaining and unlikely to affect their daily lives.

In the past few years, there has been a marked increase in violent acts in schools across America. The violent acts range from two students fighting in the hall to the shootings of Columbine. Many students, who find it difficult to cope with the pressures of growing up, are resorting to measures that were unheard of a generation ago.

As educators, we are on the frontline of a situation that seems to be worsening. As we go about our normal teaching duties, we must pay attention to all of our students. Sitting in our classroom may be the next student to resort to violence as a permanent solution to a temporary problem.



From an ESP First Timer

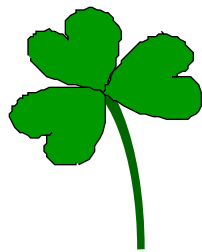
As a first time participant at this conference, I found it a wonderful experience. We met and mingled with Education Support Professionals from the twenty-one counties in New Jersey. We shared our views and ideas and saw how the other schools operate.

I personally left the conference with a wonderful feeling of receiving so much knowledge to share with the ESP's in our district.

Matty Pokrivchak

St. Patty's Day Get-together

On Friday, March 16th, approximately 27 PEA members and guests gathered at Flynn's for a St.



Patrick's Day party. Everyone donned green beads, compliments of Lynn Alleger and had a grand time. Flynn's did a wonderful job

catering the event.

Our next social and our last one for the year will be the Teacher Recognition/Retirement Party on June 7th at Harker's Hollow Golf Club.

2001 NJ Teacher Institute Seminars

The New Jersey Teacher Institute (NJTI) is a professional development program for K-12 classroom teachers, librarians, and department supervisors. Since its founding in 1994, the Institute has held 25 residential summer seminars serving 750 educators from school districts throughout the state of New Jersey.

At an NJTI seminar, you'll

interact with some of today's leading humanities scholars in a relaxed environment. NJTI seminars:

- + are week-long, and residential. (Single-room lodging and all meals are provided.)
- + are led by experienced university faculty who are well-versed in the K-12 curriculum.
- + often include field trips and special guest presentations by visiting scholars.
- + prepare teachers to implement the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards for social studies education and language arts literacy.
- + provide 40 hours towards the 100 hours of continuing education requirement.

Participants may receive a \$250 stipend and earn graduate credits through the Thomas Edison State College or Rutgers University.

Four seminars are being offered this summer dealing with Genocide, NJ History, Religious Diversity and Technology.

For further information, contact Doug Morris at the high school.

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