

# FEAtures

The Newsletter of the Ferndale Education Association • Vol. 9, No. 3 Nov. 24, 2004

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## Why WEA-PAC?

1. It's vital for public school employees to have a political voice.

2. WEA-PAC is education's collective voice in our state for better public schools; it's the political action arm of our Association. Simply put, the mission of the WEA Political Action Committee is to help elect friends of education.

3. The governor, legislators, school board, and a host of other elected public officials make policy decisions about compensation, school funding, accountability, testing, certification, and countless other school issues, all vital to the health and survival of public education in our state.

4. No WEA dues money can be used for contributions to candidates for public office. Voluntary WEA-PAC contributions are what give WEA its clout in state and local elections.

5. No one knows better what works in our classrooms than teachers and education employees. By

contributing to WEA-PAC, educators help make certain that the people who make decisions about public school funding understand and support our issues.

6. WEA-PAC gives us a united voice. Together, we can work to ensure that those elected to our state Legislature fulfill their paramount duty of amply funding public education.

7. As a WEA-PAC contributor you play an important role in ensuring that education policy reflects the needs of our schools and our children.

8. Politics and politicians regulate pretty much every aspect of our work lives in public education; in fact, 75% of public school funds come from the Washington state government.

9. WEA-PAC membership dues are only \$20 for certificated, full-time members and \$15 for classified, retired, or part-time Higher Ed members.

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**Combine your \$20 contribution with that of like-minded members who put WEA-PAC to work for better public schools.**

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**The mission of the WEA Political Action Committee is to help elect friends of education.**

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**Please see your Building Rep for an application form and join today.**

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## FEA Website Address: [www.ferndaleea.org](http://www.ferndaleea.org)

### President's Pen

by Jeremy Nolan

#### WEA-PAC

I'm sure that many of us are happy that November 2 has come and gone. This political season was one of the most difficult election years that we have faced in this state.

With approximately 75% of public school funds coming from the Washington state government, there was a lot at stake.

Hopefully your Head Rep in your building will be contacting you regarding the Washington Education Associations Political Action Committee (WEA-PAC) in the next couple of weeks.

This voluntary contribution for WEA members is used to support pro-education candidates in their bids for election. The candidates we put in office drastically affect the public school system we have today.

Many of the candidates that WEA-PAC supports are running against candidates in the pockets of big business. These are the same businesses that provided the funding for the creation of charter schools in this state, and the Evergreen Freedom Foundation (anti-union/anti-public school tax watch-dogs).

It is very difficult for the pro-education candidates to run a proper campaign against their opponents who are highly funded. That is where you come in.

Becoming a WEA-PAC member costs only \$20 per year (and can be done through balance transfers) and truly benefits us in the political arena.

We all know the importance of

being involved politically. WEA-PAC is a way to get involved without having to donate your precious and sparse free time.

#### WEA RA

It is time again for nominations to WEA's Representative Assembly, being held May 12-14, in Spokane.

This is a great opportunity to get involved in our state's teaching association, by being a part of the policy-making for next year. The decisions that come out of RA help guide the association.

"Going to RA last year gave me an opportunity to see where my dues dollars are going. To be involved in such a democratic process helped me to understand that our state association is accomplishing much more than I ever thought possible," says Gary Buckham, 2004 WEA RA delegate.

You don't only get the opportunity to help make decisions for WEA, but you also get the opportunity to connect with over 1,000 teachers and support professionals from around the state.

There are social events and fund-raisers organized by the various committees and groups within WEA. These events give teachers a chance to socialize in a very informal atmosphere.

Everyone should take this opportunity to get active in their association at least once in their career. The FEA covers all expenses (travel, food, accommodations, and release for two days).

Nomination forms are due to your Head Rep by Friday, December 3. Now is the time to get involved

FEAtures is published 11 times a year, August through June, to inform Association members of FEA activities, negotiated policies and district-wide points of interest. Letters, guest columns, announcements, and story ideas are welcome.

**Submission Instructions:** Send items to Donna Sargent, FEAtures Editor, Ferndale High School, x9359, [dsargent@ferndale.wednet.edu](mailto:dsargent@ferndale.wednet.edu) or David Fayram, FEA Website Editor, Ferndale High School, x9267, [dfayram@ferndale.wednet.edu](mailto:dfayram@ferndale.wednet.edu).

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and make a much larger difference in the public education system in our state.

### Building reps:

**Please collect home email addresses of any members who want an occasional reminder when critical legislative issues need attention. FEA legislative coordinator, Susan Gelhar, monitors Olympia, Congress, and UniServ, and alerts educators when action is called for. Forward lists to Jeremy Nolan. (All home email is sent blind and addresses are never shared.)**

# State president supports WEA benefits

## Why WEA?

by Charles Hasse

The WEA is a proud and powerful advocate for public school students and employees. We have exercised political power to raise academic standards and lower class sizes. We have campaigned for better pay for school employees. We have fought for safe and orderly schools.

Our mission is simple and straightforward: to make public education the best it can be for students, staff, and communities. We hope they are goals you share, because the strength of our members' voice is derived from your unity.

Nevertheless, some organizations would like you to quit as a WEA member. One such group is the Northwest Professional Educators (NWPE). With dubious guidance and considerable resources of the Evergreen Freedom Foundation, a small group of WEA detractors recently formed NWPE.

Though the organization touts itself as an alternative to the WEA, it provides no assistance in collective bargaining, no field staff to support members, no governmental relations team to advocate in Olympia, and no in-house research, instructional, legal or communications staff.

Financial contributions to political candidates (in WEA) come from separate, voluntary donations from members, not regular dues. With more than 75,000 members, the WEA recognizes that no one political party or candidate will appeal to everyone. That's one reason WEA's Political Action Committee has made a deliberate decision to analyze and recommend political leaders based on their support for education, not simply their party affiliation.

NWPE's leaders specifically downplay their role in politics; they even use their pledge as bait to convince you to switch. Ask yourself, why might NWPE make that pledge? Who besides politicians set the state schools budget? Who draws the grid that is the base for your salary? Who decides whether to fund health insurance increases?

With a budget of more than \$10 billion for public schools in Washington, powerful competing interests have tried for years to get more of that money. Their lobbyists are still working hard behind the scenes to see that less money goes into public school employees' pockets.

NWPE's national parent organization, the Association of American Educators (AAE), propounds the views of Milton Friedman, the architect of the school privatization movement. AAE leadership is linked to extremist efforts to end all government involvement in schools. It has strong ties to anti-union groups such as the National Right to Work Foundation. Televangelist Pat Robertson is a prominent supporter.

Grant Pelesky, who recently signed a letter promoting NWPE, served one contentious term as a Washington state legislator and argued that funding "simply is not related to education, and private schools have proven that conclusively. Many teachers operating on half the salary produce students who perform equivalent or better on SAT scores ..." The ideologues promoting and paying for NWPE speak volumes about its radical hidden agenda.

There are other reasons to stick with WEA, of course. As a non-member, you could be exposed to thousands of extra dollars in bills if an

unforeseen incident at work flares into a civil suit or criminal case. As a member, your WEA/NEA insurance provides up to \$25,000 in attorney fees if you are charged with a crime related to your job. (Remember, you don't have to be guilty to be charged!) You'd lose again if you are sued in civil court (if, for example, a student is injured while under your supervision) because, as a non-member, you would not be eligible for up to \$1 million in insurance coverage to pay attorney fees and damages in employment-related lawsuits.

As a WEA member, you are entitled to more than 25 specially designed benefit, insurance, financial, and consumer education programs that could save you hundreds of dollars a year. By using these programs, you could easily save more than the cost of your annual dues.

The WEA doesn't shy away from comparisons with our detractors. Take a look at their record, and take a look at ours. The WEA has existed since 1889 and has a long history of working to improve public education in our state.

We are candid and direct about our goals and our mission. Our funding comes from our members, and our members have full and open access to the minutest details of our budget. Indeed, it is our members who determine our annual spending priorities, policies and goals.

Our success in advocating for such things as better pay and smaller classes will continue to make us a target of isolated critics. Nonetheless, we will continue to exercise our constitutional right and meet our professional responsibility to advocate for students, schools, and educators.

We hope you will join us in that mission.



## REP COUNCIL SCHEDULE

**Dec. 2 4:30 p.m.**  
(School Board meeting also that evening at which calendar issue will be addressed)

**Jan. 20 6:15 a.m.**

**Feb. 17 4:30 p.m.**

**Mar. 24 6:15 a.m.**

**Apr. 21 4:30 p.m.**

**May 19 4:30 p.m.**

Meetings are held  
at Babe's Place

Downtown Ferndale

## Rep Assembly nominations due to Head Reps by December 3

If you - or someone you know - is interested in serving as a delegate to the Representative Assembly in Spokane on May 12-14, your nominations need to be submitted to your building Head Rep or FEA president Jeremy Nolan by **Friday, Dec. 3.**

All expenses are paid for FEA representatives, including travel, lodging, and meals. Our local is allowed six delegates to the Assembly, and the Executive Board would like to see some new faces heading to Spokane this coming spring.

Nomination forms should have been placed in your mailboxes in the last week. Please take a few minutes to consider serving as a representative yourself or nominating an interested colleague for the position.

## Funny things kids say . . .



### Kids' thoughts on love

"The person is thinking: 'Yeah, I really do love him. But I hope he showers at least once a day.'" Michelle, age 9

Some lovers might be real nervous, so they are glad that they finally got it out and said it and now they can go eat." Dick, age 7

One of you should know how to write a check. Because, even if you have tons of love, there is still going to be a lot of bills." Ava, age 8

"People in love are mooshy - like puppy dogs - except puppy dogs don't wag their tails nearly as much." Arnold, age 10

"When a person gets kissed for the first time, they fall down and they don't get up for at least an hour." Wendy, age 8

"Don't do things like have smelly, green sneakers. You might get attention, but attention ain't the same thing as love." Alonzo, age 9

"If falling in love is anything like learning how to spell, I don't want to do it. It takes too long." Glenn, age 7

"People in love want to be sure their rings don't fall off because they paid good money for them." Gavin, age 8

"Just see if the man picks up the check. That's how you can tell if he's in love." Bobby, age 9

"Lovers will just be staring at each other and their food will get cold. Other people care more about the food." Bart, age 9