

FEAtures



The Newsletter of the Ferndale Education Association ♦ Vol. 9, No. 1 Sept. 9, 2004

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Benefits deadline tomorrow

by Cheryl Frazier

All benefits changes must be in to the District Office by Sept. 10, to provide time for data processing before the Sept. 30 payroll. Benefit packets were mailed in August due to the short turn-around time. If you didn't receive yours, check with Allysa Bronson at the District Office.

The Whatcom Educational Insurance Consortium, composed of all seven school districts in the county, has a website for members. The address is instantbenefits.net and the password is **WEIC**. At this site you can:

- Obtain a short summary of your medical, dental, vision, and EAP plans.
- Print out enrollment and change forms.
- Access participating provider lists.
- Link to PERS, TRS, & SERS websites for information about state retirement programs.
- Obtain customer service phone numbers.

Members often ask, "How do I locate an NBN vision provider in this area?" An easy way to do this is to go to the instantbenefits.net site. It has a link to NBN's provider list, which is updated daily. At the site, click on the "Participating Providers" button. Click on "Vision Providers." Enter a city within Whatcom County. The name of the provider and zip code are not necessary. Scroll down to view the names of all the providers in that city.

FEA Representatives to the District Benefits Advisory Committee Rebecca Montgomery (*Horizon MS*) and Cheryl Frazier (*Skyline*) serve as FEA representatives to the Ferndale Benefits Advisory Committee as well as to the countywide consortium. E-mail them with questions or concerns related to health care benefits.

Credits and clock hours due 9/10

Christine Anderson in Certificated Personnel at the Administration Office has submitted the following information regarding posting credits and clock hours for movement on the salary schedule.

Attach the official transcript (or Clock Hour Registration form) to the white copy of the signed Request for Credit Approval form and forward it to Christine Anderson at the district office **NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 10**.

Remember to keep the yellow copy of the approval form for your records. Anderson also suggests that you keep a copy of the transcript or registration form for your records. This way you will have a complete record of what you have turned in to the district.

As in the past, credits and clock hours must be received by the September 10 deadline in order to be counted for movement on the salary schedule.

For any classes that are completed in August, you may submit an

unofficial transcript, grade report, or letter from the registrar (attached to the Request for Credit Approval form) **NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 10**.

A letter from the registrar must show classes completed, number of credits, and grade. This documentation must be followed by an official transcript and be received in the personnel office no later than **NOVEMBER 1**.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please refer to Appendix III of your FEA contract, **GUIDELINES FOR COUNTING CREDITS AND CLOCK HOURS**. You may also call Christine Anderson in the Certificated Personnel office at extension 9206.

If the credits and clock hours that you have taken over the summer will not move you to the right and over to the next pay level on the salary schedule, you do not need to be concerned about getting your paperwork in on time.

New FEA Website Address: www.ferndaleea.org

YMCA offers group memberships

Any employee of the Ferndale School District is eligible to join the YMCA at a reduced group membership rate. The membership year runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, but employees may join any time during the year at a prorated amount. The balance for the year must be made in one payment.

The discount is substantial by prepaying the year - almost 40% off the monthly rate. (Rates shown are for SY 2003-04)

	Monthly 12 Months	Annual Full Rate	Discounted Group Rate
SINGLE ADULT	\$384.00	\$288.00	\$230.40
COUPLE	\$600.00	\$456.00	\$364.80
FAMILY	\$720.00	\$528.00	\$422.40
SGL PARENT&CHILD	\$480.00	\$360.00	\$288.00
LOCKER SERVICE		\$ 54.00	\$ 43.20
TOWEL SERVICE		\$ 42.00	\$ 33.60

In addition to use of the pool, weight room, and gym, the Y offers many free exercise classes (aerobics, yoga) and discounts to members on those with a fee (weight training, swing dancing, swim lessons, etc.). Adult locker rooms have sauna and steam rooms.

Members can use any county YMCA's and get free passes at out-of-area Y's. In addition, group members receive a guest card for 12 free visits to use for friends and relatives.

E-mail Cheryl Frazier (cfrazier@ferndale.wednet.edu) for a 2-week free pass and an application, or join directly at the YMCA and let them know you're joining under the Ferndale School District Group Membership. Passes may not be used by previous local YMCA members.

Funny things kids say . . .

Kids' Views on Relationships

How do you decide whom to marry?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all the way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

What is the right age to get married?

Twenty-three is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then. - Camille, age 10

No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married. - Freddie, age 6

What do most people do on a date?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, age 8

On the first date, they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. - Martin, age 10

When is it okay to kiss someone?

The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that. - Curt, age 7

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 or David Fayram, FEA Website Editor, Ferndale High School, x9267,

dfayram@ferndale.wednet.edu. FEAtures is published on an iMac using PageMaker Plus 6.5. Please submit copy electronically on Microsoft Word. Deadline is the second Friday of every month.

*Welcome back,
Ferndale
Educators!*



*Hope you all have
a personally and
professionally
satisfying school year!*

When they're rich. - Pam, age 7

The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do. - Howard, age 8

“Let’s seize the opportunities we have to work together”

by **Mary Jo Durborow**
Ferndale School Board Member

Once again, the Washington State Legislature bypassed its paramount constitutional duty to the public school system; the Chair of the Senate Education Committee bullied through his Charter School bill by holding other bills hostage to its passage. While the Simple Majority bill passed the House (again), it too was held hostage in Executive Session by the Senate Ed Committee. Overall, the education community was treated as *persona non gratis*.

I think I’ve been knocking on the Olympia door too long (13 years), and my cynicism has become deeply entrenched. On the other hand, I see a light at the end of the tunnel. WSSDA and other education associations have murmured about a lawsuit against the state for as long as I’ve been around, but no one has come up with the force and finances to launch it. The WEA Representative Assembly’s decision last spring to start the ball rolling is a new opportunity for all of us to work together.

There certainly are state issues that school board members and teachers do not agree on, but the lack of adequate funding is one we can all hang our hats on. I am excited by the prospect of all of our state associations working together in a forceful and united effort to finally focus our legislators’ attention on their paramount duty.

Locally, we all have a responsibility to be proactive during the campaign season, to make sure that candidates clearly state their intentions regarding funding, salaries, and whether preK-12 education will be a priority if they assume office.

I have a proposal for you.

Some years back, Susan Browne and I organized an education candidate forum co-sponsored by the Ferndale School Board and the FEA, and it was very successful. There is no Senate race this year, but there will be challenged races for the House seats. I’d be happy to work with you to arrange a forum in the fall that focuses on education only, and to do the planning that could make it a very public event.

In order to make it happen, we would have to start planning before the next school year starts. I think it is a worthwhile joint venture and hope you do, too.

Thank you for your passionate dedication to children. Let’s seize the opportunities we have to work together!

President’s Pen

by **Jeremy Nolan, FEA President**

I want to take a quick opportunity to thank all FEA members for a great year in the district. If it weren’t for everyone’s active involvement, my job and the job of all representatives would become that much more work.

The increase in FEA involvement was outstanding this year, and it is even more important next year as we prepare for the next negotiating round. Be sure to thank your Building Reps before the end of the year for all of their hard work in representing you, the members.

A couple of goals that I have for next year are increasing political involvement and adding more Building Reps to our Rep Council.

In the political climate in the state and federal government, it is very important that teachers take an active role in politics. If we are not willing to stand up for ourselves, the public will not do it for us. In our local arena, the more voices that we have to represent our members, the more we can get accomplished for everyone.

I wish everyone a wonderful summer. Get your much deserved rest!!

The 50/50 Phenomenon

by Susan Gelhar
FEA Legislative Coordinator

It seems to me that on many school issues, teachers often split about evenly. Why is that? I guess as a group, we are wonderfully diverse and open-minded. Try it sometime. Ask your co-workers an education question such as, "Yes or no, is discipline a problem? Should we give more homework? Are we teaching the right stuff for the future?"

Are any of these questions (or answers) affected by politics? Our association's message this year has been that everything we do is affected by political decisions at every level of governance.

Here's a brief update on several key issues that affect us all:

1. Members successfully gathered more than enough signatures for the Protect Our Public Schools coalition to put Referendum 55 on the November ballot so voters can decide AGAIN whether to spend our education dollars on charter schools.

2. The annual NEA report reveals that our fair state ranked a dismal 34th in per pupil spending last year; \$821 less than the national average! Our

kids deserve better. How can we attract and retain top teacher talent with numbers like that? Contact Olympia! Meet your local State Representatives at summer events!

3. The reauthorization of Special Education IDEA legislation, having passed both Senate & House, now goes to conference committee to reconcile the differences. At issue is the definition of "highly qualified teacher" and the level of federal funding. The House version proposes to fund only 20% rather than the original intent of 40% federal funding; state and local must cover the shortfall. Please email Washington, DC today (and everyday!) on www.nea.org. Click Legislative Action Center.

4. Bookmark the site www.washingtonnea.org for more information and to let your elected officials know how these important issues impact your teaching. Also check our website after the July NEA Rep Assembly or contact our delegate, President Jeremy Nolan for results of this important convention. Another excellent (some say the best) website for non-partisan voter information is www.vote-smart.org.

In conclusion, here are the results of an informal teacher poll that got me thinking about the 50/50 phenomenon. Q: Will you be more active or less active on political issues over the summer? Half said, "I'm way too busy/stressed during school, so I plan to make up for it over the summer." The other half said, "Are you kidding? I do absolutely nothing during my summer off." Both sound good to me, but if you have the urge to make a difference, please contact me or make sure your building rep puts your home email on our list. Have a great one!

On a more personal note:

As a new member to the FEA Rep Council this year, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to be involved as the Legislative Coordinator. I was impressed by the work and dedication of those in office, those researching health benefits, those experts on the bylaws, and all other projects.

Thanks to our "new" President for giving us another year and a special thanks to Susan Browne from our high school colleagues who still seek her out for her wisdom and expertise.

Funny things kids say . . .

A spelling mistake on a fourth-grader's paper: "My family and I are going to eleven-worth for the weekend." Ann Fulton

"You have 'four ton' cookies with your Chinese meal." Jan Lindsay

On the Washington, D.C. trip this year, we took 21 seventh and eighth grader students for picture stops at the Washington Monument, the Capitol, the White House, and many of the memorials. On the third day of the trip, while we stood in line at George Washington's

home in Mount Vernon, one student said, "I just took a picture of a squirrel. I think that's my best picture yet!" Bryan Milliren

I work with 6th graders individually in remedial reading. One student needs to be able to move a little bit in order to be at his best, so I let him sit on a chair with wheels. Occasionally, he rolls around a bit and is then able to stay focused. One day we were talking about Middle School, and as it was time for him to leave, he turned to me with a forlorn look and said, "I'm

gonna miss this chair!" Maja Gowan

Before going on a field trip, I reached into my closet to get my coat and quickly looked into the mirror. A boy spoke up, "You look fine, Mrs. Rutledge, let's just go!" Sue Rutledge

Second grade child: Mrs. Mac! I need valium! Valium!
Mrs. Mac: Me too, honey.
Child: No, VALIUM! (Pointing to the headphones on the read-along center -- Volume!)
Tiffany MacSlarrow