

B.R.E.A.D

Bridgewater-Raynham Educational Association Digest

December 2007



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Wishing everyone a happy holiday season and a restful winter recess!

What's Happening

Sharon LaFrenaye (WMS) was lucky enough to just wrap up a wonderful collaboration with an illustrator friend of hers.

She met James Edwards through a parent letter she sent out to all of her new students. Along with introducing the art curriculum, she put out an invitation for any family members who are artists to come in and visit the class. Mr. Edwards volunteered to come in last year as he is a professor in the Art Dept. at UMASS Dartmouth, a free lance illustrator, and the father of one of her former students. They had a great visit last year and this year with a viewing of his artwork and demo./workshop on water-color techniques.

In September, when he was approached by his publisher to illustrate scenes for an elementary school text book, he gave Sharon a call. The story is about a boy who is initially embarrassed that his father, a janitor, who begins working at his school. In the end, he ends up realizing the important role his dad plays in his school, and he is comfortable and proud of his work.

A photo shoot was set up (with parental and principal permission) and he worked on the sketches. Little did James know, but Sharon's father happens to be a maintenance man. He even wears the same uniform that the writer/publisher were looking to portray! So her father (Bob) graciously volunteered to pose (he declined the staging makeup some wanted to put on him!) and through the magic of JPEGs and Photoshop, the kids Bob were meshed together. The final paintings were sent to and approved for print by the publisher.

Know your Contract

Q: Did course reimbursement change in our new contract?

A: All that changed is the amount allowed per school year. The reimbursement is \$800 per school year. There was clarification on summer courses. Grade reports for summer courses must be submitted by the end of September in order for it to count for the previous school year.

If you have any questions about the contract, we will try to answer them in this space. You can send questions by e-mail to bridgeraynea@comcast.net.

Head's Up

I know it's early, but as schools plan retirement parties, please give the information to your building rep to share with the Executive Board and our retirees. You may also send info to bridgeraynea@comcast.net.



Retiree News

⇒ Jim Jackson is teaching at Mass Maritime and has published two books on navigation.

From *MTA Today*

Public school students from Massachusetts outscored or tied all other states on a set of 4 NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) exams which collectively are called the nation's report card. Massachusetts fourth graders scored first in math and reading. Eighth graders scored first in math and tied for first in reading with Montana, New Jersey, and Vermont.

While this is good news, there is some bad news behind some of those numbers. The achievement gap gets wider according to race, limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities. Results show that scores were rising faster before "No Child Left Behind" went into effect.

GPO/WEP update

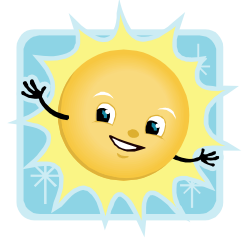
(from the November 2007 issue of *MTA Today*)

Retired Medford High School English teacher Margaret Kane urged members of the U.S. Senate to repeal two provisions that undermine the retirement security of hundreds of thousands of public school educators and others who have dedicated their lives to public service. Before dying of cancer at age 53, Kane's husband contributed to Social Security for more than 30 years. Two days before he died, he told his wife that he would be able to "rest in peace," knowing that she would have his Social Security benefits to supplement her pension when she retired. "This is an issue of fairness," Kane said. "My husband worked hard and paid into the Social Security system for many years, yet my family never saw a dollar."

Mark Levine, an English teacher at Littleton Middle School, is a good example of the financial harm the WEP causes. He worked for 15 years as a waiter and chef before he joined the education profession. Levine, now in his 13th year of teaching, was surprised to learn that he is unlikely to get any of the money he paid into Social Security while working in the private sector. "Since I decided to change careers, I'll get nothing,"

Member news

Michelle Carroll (WMS) gave birth to a son, Joseph, on Dec. 3.



BREA sunshine info can be sent to Caryn Greenberg at metrodsn@aol.com or at Williams Middle. Guidelines may be found at <http://bridgewater-raynham.massteacher.org/sunshine.html>. Any member news can be sent to John Souto at bridgeraynea@comcast.net or MES/Central House

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Levine said. "The bottom line for me, personally, is that I've paid into the fund. I've done what I was supposed to do. So why am I getting penalized for choosing to teach?"

This is why we had members signing petitions on the first day of school at the high school to urge our representatives in Congress to change the laws. More specific details and information may be found at the BREA website bridgewater-raynham.massteacher.org and click on GPO/WEP.