



### President's Message

Throughout the months leading to the November election, it seemed that all anyone could think about was the NJ Governor's race. While Barbara Buono did not win, she made an excellent showing, despite the financial limitations of her campaign, and historically low voter turn-out. And the other elections around the state were not as disappointing. We are optimistic about the make-up of the legislature and pleased by the election of several pro-education candidates throughout the state.

Another source of optimism is that at the end of November, we settled and ratified our contract. Your Association Negotiations Team is proud of our most recent session. The process, which began about 18 months ago, resulted in an agreement which we believe to be equitable and fair.

Negotiating a contract is one of the many services your Association provides for you. In addition to working to get you a fair wage, and to help craft language to insure a safe working environment, your Association also advises and advocates for all members. Your leaders are trained, not only to negotiate, but also in evaluation, legislation, professional development practices and workplace advocacy.

Your Association will continue to advocate for the rights of our members. We hope our members will never have to struggle in an unhappy working environment, but, if necessary, we remain committed to fight alongside you, as we have always done.

I wish you all the wonderful joys of the season: warm and loving homes, good food, and friends and family.

Enjoy our much-needed break, and have a happy and healthy New Year.

*Lee Ann*

### Vice President's Message

As the calendar year comes to a close, and we begin working under a newly negotiated contract, Lee and I would like to encourage you to take on a leadership role in your association. Currently, there are committee chair and member positions available and your voice and involvement can make a difference for all of our members. If you have not served your PTEA in a leadership capacity in recent years, please consider contacting an officer and offering your services. Training for Negotiations, Grievance, PRIDE, Publicity and other positions will be provided through our county association and NJEA.

*Ann Marie*

### **Nominations for PTEA Friends of Education are due by December 20!**

Please send a nominating letter, as well as the nominee's phone number and address to Karen Schiffel (SJG)

### **New Contract**

The contract that has been ratified by the PTEA and the BOE calls for all members (teaching staff, secretaries, aides, custodians, bus drivers, and the IT department) to move to a new salary guide effective with the December 15 paycheck. Anyone employed prior to this school year should also have moved up a step on this guide. The next salary increase and step movement will occur in February of 2015. Bus drivers, computer technicians and the Data Coordinator will move a third time in September of 2015. If you have any questions about this recent settlement, please contact a member of the negotiations team.



## Professional Development

Laura Higley (PV/PTHS)

Have you considered National Board Certification? "National Board Certification is an advanced teaching credential. As part of this process, teachers must analyze their teaching context and students' needs, submit videos of their teaching, and provide student work samples that demonstrate growth and achievement." Read more information about this program here:

<http://www.nbpts.org/>

Teachers and School Leaders are subject to Professional Learning guidelines. Download a copy of the Professional Learning guidelines here.

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/profstand/> Note that there have been changes made to guideline 7. Download the update here (opens a .pdf file).

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/profstand/revisions.pdf>

The District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) and a district mentoring committee recently held meetings. These committees are comprised of administration and teacher representatives from every level. State DOE guidelines for evaluation were discussed and synthesized into our district's evaluation model. Our mentoring plan was also reviewed and updated.

## Philanthropic Account

Ann Marie Finnen (SJG)

PTEA night at Sunset Pub and Grill was a great success last month. We raised \$355 that will go directly toward scholarships for Pequannock High School graduates. Everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy themselves, and it was nice to catch up with friends and colleagues we haven't seen in a while. We are grateful to Mr. Bob

Egan, owner of Sunset, for his willingness to partner with us and for his generosity.

At the PTEA night, Dave Kohle, husband of member Angela Kohle (PTHS) and member of the PTHS Class of 1983, approached your PTEA leadership and mentioned the possibility of his Alumni committee selecting our Philanthropic Fund to receive a donation on the occasion of their 30<sup>th</sup> reunion. At the PTHS Staff Holiday Party, Dave presented Lee Ann with a check for \$500 in memory of those members of the class of 1983 who are no longer with us. Thank you to Dave and the Alumni Committee - what a wonderful tribute to your classmates' memory!

I also appreciate the generosity of members from each building who have recently made contributions to our fund. If you have not done so this year, I'd ask that you consider making a small donation. Perhaps your staff would like to hold a lunch (or breakfast) at which you take donations for our association's philanthropic account.

Or, if you'd like to sign up for payroll deductions, please contact me at SJG and I can answer any questions you may have about this easy, relatively painless way to support your PTEA's philanthropic endeavors. Jeri Asaro, PTEA Treasurer, reports that we still need to raise about \$2000 this year to maintain our usual level of scholarships.



Dave Kohle, Chair of the Class of '83 Reunion Committee,  
Debbie LeGregni (PTHS) and  
PTEA President, Lee Ann Brensinger



## Insurance

Laura Higley (PV/PTHS)

School Employee Health Benefit Plan (SEHBP) Design Committee: On August 23, 2013, health benefits changes were made for the plan year beginning January 1, 2014. The rates set on July 18, 2013 are not expected to change. According to SEHBP, prescription copayments are not changing. SEHBP plans to introduce a voluntary wellness program in 2014, NJWELL, with financial incentives via gift cards for achieving certain health goals. Read more at the link below:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/njwell/index.shtml>

Check out the Online guide to retirement here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/retirement/>

Enrolling in health benefits when you retire is explained here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/pdf/factsheets/fact11.pdf>

Do you have a child between the ages of 26 and 31 who is a full-time student in an accredited college? He or she could be eligible for insurance under your plan. Read more here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/hb-dependents.shtml#ch375>

The Family Leave Medical Act (FMLA) and the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA) offer job-protected, unpaid leave for certain reasons for up to 12 weeks. Read more here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/epbam/additional/fmla-overview.htm>

If you are planning on requesting a maternity leave or other medical leave for yourself or to care for a newborn, please contact Vice President Ann Marie Finnen. Our NJEA Uniserv rep,

Vickie Walsh, will also review letters to insure members are receiving the leave to which they are entitled.

## Grievance

Ann Marie Finnen (SJG)

During the first trimester, your PTEA has discussed with the administration and resolved several contractual concerns regarding movement across the salary guide, faculty meeting times, evaluation timelines, criticism of employees in the presence of other staff members or parents, maternity leaves and other issues. Your President and Vice President meet regularly with the Superintendent and, when necessary, other administrators to insure that your contractual and statutory rights are protected. Your Association Reps are the first line of defense and if you have any questions or believe you may need to file a grievance, contact your AR as soon as possible. The first step is always an informal discussion, but timelines must be followed to preserve the Association's ability to proceed with the levels. As part of our recent ratification, the outstanding grievance regarding the February, 2012 movement on the salary guide has been resolved. The Association is pleased with the compromise that was reached.

## Position Available

PTEA is currently looking for a member to serve as Publicity Chair. Responsibilities include maintaining the Association website and email blast system, putting together our newsletter, managing our Facebook page and sending press releases and advertisement copy to local newspapers. If you are interested in finding out more about this opportunity, please contact Lee Ann Brensinger.



## Upcoming Dates

**December 20** – deadline for Friends of Education nomination letters

**January 15** – PTEA Rep Council, PTHS

**January 17** – deadline to register for NJEA Winter Leadership Conference  
contact Lee Ann if interested

**February 12** – MCCEA Rep Council

**February 13** – PTEA Rep Council/  
Friends of Education Celebration

**February 25** – SciP workshop  
Zeris Inn, RSVP 973-366-0202

**February 26** – Pension Workshop  
Zeris Inn, RSVP 973-366-0202

**March 13** – PTEA Rep Council

**March 19** – General Membership

**March 28-February 1** – NJEA Winter Leadership Conference  
(Hilton Parsippany)

## PTEA Food Drive

Thank you to all PTEA members who contributed to our Food Drive in October to benefit the Pequannock Food Pantry, and especially to those who assisted at the First Reformed Church, delivering and sorting the donations. We will hold another drive later in the school year, and again make use of the canvas bags that we received as part of a PRIDE grant to help PTEA partner with our community.



Lee Ann and Susan Flood (PV) checking expiration dates at the food drive in October

## Congratulations to the 2013-2014 Pequannock Township Teachers of the Year!



Karen Handy- Hillview School

Charlene Valero- North Boulevard School

Eileen Kapotes- Stephen J. Gerace School

Rose Callaghan- Pequannock Valley Middle School

Galina Crocco- Pequannock Township High School

**You inspire us all!**