

# M.E.S.P. Courier

## Marana Education Support Professionals

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 2009

### A Letter from your Vice-President

Hi Union Brothers and Sisters,

It has been a long time since I wrote an article for the MESP Courier, so I hope this all makes some sense to you. I am going to try to explain the upcoming elections, and MESP Constitution ratification vote. Let me first address the ratification vote, as this will impact the local election.

Your officers and the Constitution Committee have been working hard on getting our MESP Constitution updated. We have found several things that did not meet AEA standards, and since we were going through the process, we decided to look through the whole thing. One of the committee's recommendations is to have the Officers Elections on a two-year stagger. This simply means that the president and vice-president will be elected for a two-year term in odd-numbered school years and the secretary and treasurer will be elected for two-year terms in even-numbered school years. This way, you won't have a complete turnover of officers at the same time.

### Winter Social date is approaching

I am sure by now everyone has received their invitation to the MESP Winter Social. They were sent out by interoffice mail last week. In case you missed your invitation, the social will be on January 16, 2009 from 4:00 - 6:00 at Grumpy's Grill located on 2960 West Ina Road.

This ratification vote will be in February at the General Membership Meeting. If the new wording in our Constitution passes, we will hold our officer election as follows. The president and vice-president will be voted on for a two-year term. The secretary and treasurer will also be voted on for a one-year term, then next year they will be voted on again but for two-year terms. If for some reason the membership votes down the constitution changes, we will have an election for all four officers for two-year terms.

The next election will decide who our delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly will be. Both teacher and support-staff unions from across our state, totaling 34,000 members strong, will vote and send as many as 800 delegates, making this the largest union convention in Arizona. This year's DA will be held April 24-25, 2009 at the Marriott Mesa and Mesa Convention Center, and we should be allowed to send 7 members according to our total membership count, which is hovering around 175.

A map can be found on your flyers and it is also located on our website:

[www.maranaesp.org](http://www.maranaesp.org)

We will be supplying the appetizers and sodas if you would like any other drinks there is a bar available at your expense.

The final election I need to address is the NEA Representative Assembly. This, too, will be held at the same time as the others. We will be voting to send one person to this convention which is being held July 1 through July 6 in San Diego, CA for the Association's 147th Annual Meeting and 88th Representative Assembly. The National Education Association Representative Assembly (RA) is NEA's highest decision-making body. With over 9,000 delegates, it is also the world's largest democratic, deliberative body.

One of the problems we have dealt with over the years is the cost of sending someone to the NEA/RA. This will be addressed separately at a MESP meeting. We still need to elect someone, even if we vote not to fully fund them.

As you can see, a lot of things are happening, and I think truly great things are ahead for MESP and its members. To all my union brothers and sisters out there, have a great and successful second semester.

We hope to see all of our members at Grumpy's along with any of the newly recruited people.

Please join us for some fun, fantastic food and lots of friendship!

#### Inside this issue:

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Visit our website at  
[www.maranaesp.org](http://www.maranaesp.org)

#### Highlights:

- THE IRS HAS SEVEN SUGGESTIONS TO GET BETTER ORGANIZED FOR THE TAX SEASON
- YOUR LEGISLATURE, YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS
- SAVE ON ENERGY COSTS BY DOING SOME DETECTIVE WORK FOR LEAKS
- CALENDARS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS. SEE OUR DAYS OFF PLUS WHEN OUR NEXT MEETINGS ARE BEING HELD
- DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR WINTER SOCIAL

## Tax Filing Tips for Your 2007 Return

It's time to get tax papers in order for filing of your 2007 return tax. The IRS has seven suggestions to get better organized and to secure your refund earlier if you paid more taxes than you owe.

Earlier is better when it comes to working on your taxes. Taxpayers are encouraged to get a head start on tax preparation, especially since early filers avoid the last minute rush and get their refunds sooner. Here are seven easy ways to get a good jump on your taxes long before the April deadline arrives:

1. Gather your records in advance. Make sure you have all the records you need, including W-2s and 1099s. Don't forget to save a copy for your files.

2. Get the right forms. They're available around the clock on the IRS Web site, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

3. Take your time. Don't forget to leave room for a coffee break when filling out your tax return, as rushing can mean making a mistake.

4. Double-check your math and verify all Social Security numbers. These are among the most common errors found on tax returns. Taking care will reduce your chance of hearing from the IRS and speed up your refund.

5. E-filing is easy. E-filing catches math errors, provides confirmation your return has been received and gives you a faster refund.

6. Get the fastest refund. When you e-file file early, you receive your refund faster. When you choose "Direct Deposit," you receive your refund sooner than waiting for a check.

7. Don't panic. If you have a problem or question, remember

the IRS is there to help. Try the IRS Web Site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call the IRS customer service number toll-free at 800-829-1040.

Keep in mind that there are new recordkeeping requirements for cash contributions for your 2007 filing:

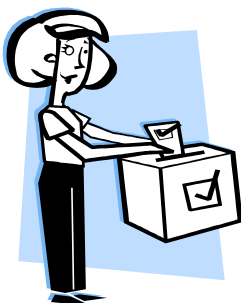
\* You cannot deduct a cash contribution, regardless of the amount, unless you keep as a record of the contribution a bank record (such as a canceled check, or a bank statement containing the name of the charity, the date, and the amount) or a written communication from the charity.

\* The written communication must include the name of the charity, date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution.



*It's income tax time again,  
Americans: time to gather up  
those receipts, get out those tax  
forms, sharpen up that pencil, and  
stab yourself in the aorta.*

*~Dave Barry*



## Your Legislature, Your Working Conditions

Your Legislature, Your Working Conditions

Who has the greatest influence on your working conditions? Your principal? Your supervisor? Your Superintendent? Your School Board? Sure, each of these influences your pay rate, the number of hours you work, the expectations you must fulfill and the protections you're provided. But it all starts with the Arizona State Legislature. It determines how large the school district's budget will be. It writes the laws that govern employee relations. In short, it sets the framework for what is possible when MESP negotiates for fair working conditions. Everything else follows the Legislature's decisions. Perhaps this is why 81% of AEA members believe that the State Legislature is the biggest obstacle to achieving success in our schools.

On January 12th, the 49th Legislature will open for business. We need to pay attention to the decisions they make. We need to ask ourselves, "Do they

really support the work we do for our kids and the community?" And what do legislators have in mind for public schools this year? First, let's consider the lay of the land. The new legislature will have to address a \$1.2 billion deficit for the FY2009 budget. As well, the FY2010 deficit will be even higher. Recent budgets have been thrashed out between a Democratic Governor and a Republican Legislature. This year Republicans will control the House, Senate, and Governor's Office, making for a significantly different dynamic in budget negotiations. Moreover, the number of pro-public education seats in the House and Senate has decreased. In fact, as if announce its intentions, legislators re-named the Senate Education Committee the Education the "Accountability and Reform Committee." In this context, Senator Jim Waring will introduce a bill to repeal the State Equalization Tax rate which eliminates nearly \$250 million in public school funding. When

asked which part of the state budget would be targeted for cuts, Senate President Bob Burns said, "Obviously K-12, that is the biggest component of the budget." Though Mr. Burns declined to identify potential cuts, it's instructive that some legislators seriously contemplate cutting out all-day kindergarten funding.

Though we face unsympathetic attitudes about education funding, we shouldn't lose heart. Common sense is on our side. Let's be frank; school districts are an important economic engine for any community. Aside from the necessary investment they are in our children, they also provide hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity through payrolls and the procurement of goods and services from local vendors and contractors. Given the economic downturn we find ourselves in, does it really make sense to cut back on education funding? We are already 49th in the nation in per pupil spending,

(continued on page 3)

## Save energy by doing detective work on leakage

It is that time of year again. Time for some of our energy bills to raise. Your home can be more energy efficient year long if you figure out where air is leaking to the outside. There are some simple tests you can use to become your own household detective and to save on fuel costs.

Your house may have leaks, increasing your fuel bill. It will pay to find the source of those leaks.

You may already know where some air leakage occurs in your home, such as an under-the-door draft, but you will need to find the less obvious gaps to properly air seal a home.

For a thorough and accurate measurement of air leakage in your home, you can hire a qualified technician to conduct an energy audit, particularly a blower door test. A blower door test, which depressurizes a home, can reveal the location of many leaks. A complete energy audit will also help determine areas in your home that need

more insulation.

Be your own household detective. There are ways to find some air leaks yourself without a blower door test:

First, look for places where different materials meet, such as between brick and wood siding, between foundation and walls, and between the chimney and siding.

Inspect around the following areas for any cracks and gaps that could cause air leaks:

- Door and window frames
- Mail chutes
- Electrical and gas service entrances
- Cable TV and phone lines
- Outdoor water faucets
- Where dryer vents pass through walls
- Bricks, siding, stucco, and foundation
- Air conditioners vents and fans

You can also depressurize your home yourself to detect leaks.

Here's how:

1. Turn off your furnace on a cool, very windy day.
2. Shut all windows and doors.
3. Turn on all exhaust fans that blow air outside, such as bathroom fans or stove vents.
4. Light an incense stick and pass it around the edges of common leak sites. Whenever the smoke is sucked out of or blown into the room, there's a draft.

If you don't want to turn off your furnace, you can just turn on all your exhaust fans to depressurize your home.

Other air-leak detection methods include the following:

- Shining a flashlight at night over all potential gaps while a partner observes the house from outside. Large cracks will show up as rays of light. However, this is not a good way to detect small cracks.
- Shutting a door or window on a piece of paper. If you can pull the paper out without tearing it, you're losing energy.

U.S. Department of Energy



*"Money in the bank is like toothpaste in the tube.*

*Easy to take out, hard to put back."*

*~ Earl Wilson*

## Your Legislature, Your Working Conditions...continued

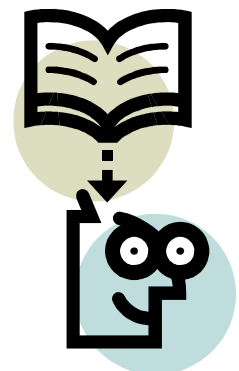
roughly \$2700 below the national average. Eventually, the economy will bounce back. But do we really want to pay the long-term cost of falling further behind?

Fortunately, none of this is inevitable. The late journalist, James Reston, once observed that, "All politics are based on the indifference of the majority." In other words, the legislature will make poor decisions about our public schools as long as most of us fail to speak up. You see, our silence is their permission. And the fact is, MESP and AEA need your help. Lend your voice to

the cause of public schools. Get involved and stay informed by joining 6,000 other public education supporters who receive the weekly AEA Legislative Update. Take action on behalf of our schools. It's easy. Just go to link below this article and fill out the form, or ask your building rep for a registration form and MESP will send it in for you. Also, sign a petition in support of proper public school funding when it circulates your worksite.

You may think politics has nothing to do with you. Don't be mistaken; it has everything to do with you. Remember, it's your

legislature and your working conditions. Go to <http://capwiz.com/nea/az/mlm/signup/>.





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Treasurer: Heather Johnson: 294-6763  
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**Association Representatives:**

- Robin Abrams-Ryans - Transportation
- Kelly Banales - Roadrunner Elementary
- Robert Banales - Transportation
- Mike Ellis - Marana High School
- Peggy Ellis - Marana Middle School
- John Farmer - Estes Elementary
- Karen Figueroa - Transportation
- Sheryl Gobrecht - Transportation
- Mary Heintz - Transportation
- Tiffany Montes - Administration / MCAT
- Terry Pickell - Marana High School
- Rulynn Rohler - Desert Winds Elementary
- Marguerite Shannon - Transportation
- Phyllis Yancey - Transportation

For information about events in the calendars please check our website under the News Tab. Information is updated daily to reflect any changes.

In an effort to keep the General Meetings down to one hour or less we will be holding Executive Board Meetings once a month. The General Meeting will be held Every 3 months.

We hope that this will encourage more members to attend our General Meetings because we want our main focus of these meetings to be about you. This will be a time for you to hold fellowship with your colleagues, express concern over issues that you are having at your sites or share ideas.

All meetings are at 6:00 pm and will be held at the Community Schools Building on Lon Adams, unless noted otherwise. A map can be found in the Meetings tab on our website.

# January 2009

| Sun | Mon                             | Tue                   | Wed | Thu         | Fri                    | Sat                  |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|     |                                 |                       |     | 1<br>Winter | 2<br>Break             | 3                    |
| 4   | 5                               | 6                     | 7   | 8           | 9                      | 10<br>AR<br>Training |
| 11  | 12                              | 13 E-Board<br>Meeting | 14  | 15          | 16<br>Winter<br>Social | 17                   |
| 18  | 19 Martin<br>Luther<br>King Day | 20                    | 21  | 22          | 23                     | 24                   |
| 25  | 26                              | 27                    | 28  | 29          | 30                     | 31                   |

# February 2009

| Sun | Mon | Tue                      | Wed                      | Thu         | Fri        | Sat |
|-----|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|------------|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3                        | 4                        | 5           | 6          | 7   |
| 8   | 9   | 10<br>E-Board<br>Meeting | 11                       | 12          | 13         | 14  |
| 15  | 16  | 17                       | 18                       | 19          | 20         | 21  |
| 22  | 23  | 24                       | 25<br>General<br>Meeting | 26<br>RODEO | 27<br>DAYS | 28  |

# March 2009

| Sun | Mon         | Tue                      | Wed         | Thu         | Fri         | Sat |
|-----|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| 1   | 2           | 3                        | 4           | 5           | 6           | 7   |
| 8   | 9           | 10<br>E-board<br>Meeting | 11          | 12          | 13          | 14  |
| 15  | 16<br>***** | 17<br>SPRING             | 18<br>BREAK | 19<br>***** | 20<br>***** | 21  |
| 22  | 23          | 24                       | 25          | 26          | 27          | 28  |
| 29  | 30          | 31                       |             |             |             |     |