

# Professional Educator

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## From the Director's Desk—*Looking back, Looking ahead . . .*



Cindy Omlin  
Executive Director

As the summer winds down, I hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits. We are excited to begin a new school year! We look forward to serving you along with many more new NWPE members! Before looking ahead, let's look back at last year. Just what has NWPE been up to?

**LEGAL SERVICES.** During the 2002-2003 school year, NWPE provided many members with legal assistance on issues regarding job protection, evaluations, union and administrator relations, and the WASL. Despite paying for WEA services and often having dedicated local union representatives, many educators complain that they received little or no help from the union when needing assistance with a grievance or job protection issue. In some cases, the union actually *harmed* the teacher's case or worked with administration to *thwart* the due process rights of the teacher! Members were grateful for NWPE's prompt legal support so that they could focus on their priorities—helping students succeed and improving the state of education for the benefit of all.

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**In some cases, the union actually *harmed* the teacher's case or worked with administration to *thwart* the due process rights of the teacher!**

### In This Issue

- 1 *Looking Back, Looking Ahead*
- 1 *2003 NEA Convention News*
- 2 *The Looming Teacher Shortage (& Other Myths)*
- 3 *\$\$\$ Member Recruitment Incentive Program \$\$\$*
- 4 *NWPE Aids Teacher When Academic Freedom and Job Threatened*
- 6 *NWPE Scholarship and Mini-Grant Program & Awards*
- 8 *Lynden Teachers Explore Options with NWPE & WEA*
- 9 *Does Your Job Evaluation Make the Grade?*
- 11 *Is Your Job Safe?? Comparing Liability Policies*
- 12 *Focus on Effort, Not Ability*

**CONFERENCE.** Last year, NWPE hosted an informative conference on professional leadership and the independent educators' movement, the WASL, and character education. Members took the new information about the

Continued on page 8, See Director's Message

### 2003 NEA CONVENTION NEWS BITS

2003-2004 NEA dues will increase \$4. The revised NEA budget includes funding for 10 new staffers. Spending on NEA staff and executive salaries and benefits will increase almost \$5 million to more than \$83 million (a hike of 6.33 percent). The revised budget increases spending on "Executive Committee benefits" to \$311,364 from the previously budgeted \$191,364—an increase of 62.7 percent.

NEA issued \$2,914,000 to 20 state affiliates in 2002-03. Expenditures included grants to oppose an English immersion initiative, conduct tuition tax credit polling, fund media campaigns to raise taxes, support a proposed collective bargaining law for fire fighters, and support for a radioactive waste tax initiative. \$515,000 was also dispersed for organizing (raising membership) in five states. (*Education Intelligence Agency*)

George Archibald of the Washington Times reports, "In the resolutions, NEA members supported homosexual rights; programs to teach schoolchildren to be tolerant of homosexual, bisexual and 'transgendered' lifestyles; and allowing 'reproductive freedom,' including abortion for teenagers. They also criticized capital punishment in the United States and called for a federally run health care program."

## The Looming Teacher Shortage (and Other Myths)



Ed Dawson  
NWPE President

In the early 1990's authoritative sources began to warn of an impending teacher shortage. The Wall Street Journal reported that a disproportionate number of teachers were nearing retirement and that schools of education weren't producing enough replacements.

In his State of the Union address in 1999, President Clinton predicted a drastic shortage of teachers in the coming decade. His implicit message, of course,

*Teachers who leave the profession cite numerous reasons; but, the most common are fixed salary schedules, lukewarm administrative support and rigid seniority rules.*

was that all of this could be avoided if the American people would simply allow his policies to continue by electing his Vice President.

The prediction from several sources was that our country would need 2 million new teachers before 2008 just to stay even. That averages out to 200,000 new teachers per year, so let's take a look at where we might find them.

The U. S. Census Bureau has reported that an average of 100,000 citizens have earned Bachelor's degrees in Education for the last fifteen years or so. That cuts the predicted deficit in half so we have to ask where we get the other 100,000.

They will come from a number of innovative programs such Troops to Teachers. The Department of Defense and Department of Education implemented this plan to provide retired military an opportunity to teach. Their slogan is "Proud to Serve Again" and these ex-military personnel have brought extensive life experience and practical knowledge of motivational techniques to many American classrooms.

Schools in every state have also acquired new teachers as a result of mid-life career changes. Most staffs have teachers who are former nurses, ac-

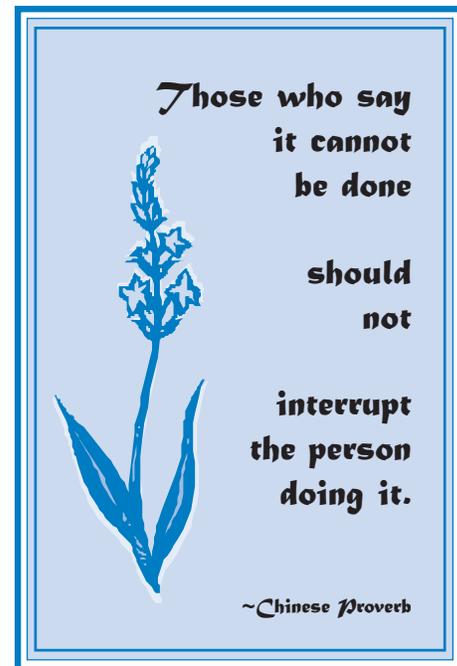
countants or lawyers. Vocational Education attracts many former carpenters, plumbers and automobile mechanics. Many states have amended their certification procedures to ease these talented individuals into the classroom.

The predicted catastrophe has simply not materialized; our schools appear to have adequate numbers of teachers with only a few exceptions. Those exceptions are mostly in specialty fields, such as English as a Second Language and Special Education. Inner city schools sometimes have difficulty finding enough qualified teachers because they are perceived as being undesirable places to work.

Department of Labor statistics reveal that teachers who teach for five years tend to stay with the profession. Teachers who leave the profession cite numerous reasons; but, the most common are fixed salary schedules, lukewarm administrative support and rigid seniority rules. Beginning salaries and classroom discipline, interestingly enough, were not cited as the top reasons for leaving.

Perhaps it is time we reexamined some of the policies that our schools have followed for the last 75 years with an eye toward making teaching more attractive as a career. <sup>NWPE</sup>

—Ed Dawson is a high school German and Spanish teacher in Battle Ground School District, Vancouver, WA. He has a law degree from Western State University, College of Law, and taught Personnel Management at Yavapai College, Prescott, AZ.



NWPE member Karen Petty of Mead and her daughters Anna and Allie volunteered countless hours to produce thousands of NWPE packets for distribution to teachers' school mailboxes. Karen is a student teacher supervisor for Gonzaga University. Thank you Karen, Anna and Allie!!

# We want to reward you!!

## New Membership Recruitment Incentive Program Pays Current and New Members!

Your one-on-one personal recommendation of NWPE is by far the most effective way of growing NWPE membership. To reward your efforts, NWPE is instituting a membership recruitment incentive program that gives cash benefits to both the new member and the recruiting member.

NWPE members may now offer potential members a dues reduction coupon for \$25. When new members include this coupon with their application form

(available in this newsletter, on NWPE brochures and at [www.nwpe.org](http://www.nwpe.org)), their first year's dues are reduced to \$144. During our membership drive (now until November 30th), members who recruit one professional level member will receive a check for \$25. Two new members will earn the recruiter a free year's NWPE dues worth \$169! (Make copies of the coupon below and fill in your name as the referring member. This coupon must have your name to receive credit.)

Additionally, the NWPE member who recruits the most new members by November 30th will receive a copy of the books *The Founders' Almanac: A Practical Guide to the Notable Events, Greatest Leaders & Most Eloquent Words of the American Founding* edited by Matthew Spalding and *No Excuses: Lessons from 21 High Performing, High Poverty Schools* by Samuel Casey Carter (donated by Heritage Foundation).

### \$\$ IT MAKES DOLLARS AND "SENSE" TO JOIN NWPE!

Many educators want to join NWPE but cannot afford to or do not want to pay full union dues plus NWPE dues. Inform these prospective members that the agency fee payer rebate in most cases fully covers the cost of NWPE dues. For the religious objector, the tax savings of the contribution of union dues to a charity may cover the cost of NWPE dues.

An agency fee payer who requests the full rebate or a religious objector who joins NWPE is typically not paying any more than what he/she would have paid for full union dues. Yet he/she is getting NWPE's additional resources, professional and legal services, and a \$2 million individual liability insurance policy with guaranteed job protection benefits for legal fees!

With or without cash off coupons, tax savings, or union rebates, NWPE membership is a real bargain! Our membership also includes union members who pay full union dues plus NWPE dues because they recognize the tremendous benefits of membership in Northwest Professional Educators! NWPE

★ ONE NEW MEMBER: \$25.00

★★ TWO NEW MEMBERS:

FREE NWPE MEMBERSHIP  
FOR ONE YEAR!  
(Value \$169)

### **\$25 NWPE Dues Reduction Coupon**

This dues reduction coupon is worth \$25.00 off the regular professional level membership dues for new members who join Northwest Professional Educators by November 30, 2003. Please include this completed form with your application to receive the dues reduction. Indicate credit card payment or make check payable to NWPE-AAE for \$144. (Regular dues are \$169.) Contact NWPE at [info@nwpe.org](mailto:info@nwpe.org) or 800-380-6973 if you wish to utilize the five month automated bank payment plan.

New Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Referring NWPE

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

## NWPE Aids Teacher When Academic Freedom and Job Status Threatened for Exposing WASL's Flaws

*Small Town, WA*—The place where fierce independence and standing up for the little guy is championed. Right? Unfortunately, wrong. The story you are about to read is true. The teacher's name has been changed to protect the reasonable relations "Mike" continues to have in his district—despite administrative harassment for fulfilling his legal and professional obligations.

Can we all agree that educators should consider multiple perspectives and all the facts as they design educational programs to benefit our students? To assist in this regard, NWPE invited Dr. Donald C. Orlich, Professor Emeritus, Science Mathematics Engineering Education Center, Washington State University, to present his research findings on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) at NWPE's Fall Leadership Conference in Spokane.

Dr. Orlich concludes that "high-stakes student testing in general and the WASL in specific have neither raised academic standards nor enhanced student achievement." He believes that the WASL has caused the *uncertainty principle* to come into play. He explains, "This principle states that the more important a quantitative indicator becomes in social decision-making the more likely it will distort and corrupt the social process it is intended to monitor. The results of a 'herd effect' by state legislatures and the U. S. Congress to legislate increased student achievement through ill-thought and forced high-stakes tests . . . will penalize the schools and millions of children for some unknown educational malaise."

Orlich reminded conference participants that for any test to have impact on instruction and learning, "it must provide useful, relevant, immediate feedback to users" and "it must be reliable and valid." The WASL, he concludes, fails all these criteria. Dr. Orlich calls on the legislature and education officials to abandon the fourth grade WASL which he believes is actually a sixth grade aptitude test. Says Orlich, "The Washington Assessment of Student Learning is an ill-conceived, unreasonable, and degrading attack on children!"

### PURSUIING THE TRUTH

Alarmed at the consequences of continued use of the WASL, NWPE member "Mike" sought out additional information from Dr. Orlich and Juanita Doyon, head of "Mothers Against the WASL," and candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction. He distributed information to other teachers and administrators and encouraged them to join together to take a stand against what he views as a costly high-stakes test that will ultimately harm education. While Mike's fellow educators did not jump on the band wagon, his Superintendent agreed in principle to support an informational School Board meeting on the WASL.

Mike's principal, however, was not pleased. At a teachers' meeting in February, the principal noted that according to ESD 101, poor WASL results could lead to such punishments as the termination of principals' credentials. Apparently upset at the potential fallout of Mike's crusade, his principal looked him straight in the eyes and noted that if he went down, "he would not go down alone." According to Mike, "This direct threat made me feel that my work environment had become somewhat hostile due to my stance on this important education issue."

### ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Undeterred, Mike attended the School Board meeting in February. He requested that the Board allow him to invite Juanita Doyon and Dr. Orlich to present their views on the WASL at their next meeting. His suggestion was enthusiastically received. Board members suggested that the public be invited.

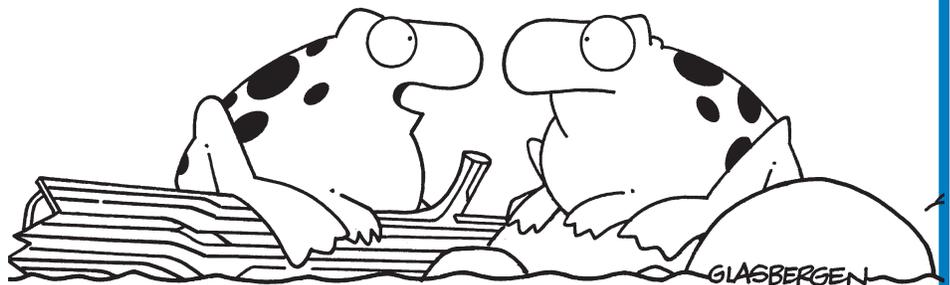
On March 15<sup>th</sup>, two representatives from ESD 101 made a WASL presentation to the Board. They contended that the WASL is a good indicator of student progress and that the test would, indeed, be used to determine student graduation, college admission, continued school funding, and administrator/teacher credentials.

Four days later, Doyon and Orlich presented information critical of the WASL to the Board. Mike reports that "the speakers were well-received and several board members were enthusiastic about the information."

Prior to that, some students who were aware of the WASL controversy asked Mike his opinion about the WASL. He was honest with them regarding the shortcomings of the test, the high cost to taxpayers, the high stakes nature of the test, and parents' right to opt their children out of the test. Some students

Continued on page 5, See Freedom

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**"Looks aren't everything. It's what's inside you that really matters. A biology teacher told me that."**

## Freedom, Continued from page 4

took anti-WASL buttons from a box on Mike's counter that Mrs. Doyon had sent him after his initial contact. He told students that teachers were required to administer the test and that they should make every effort to score well on the test.

## RETALIATION REVERSED

In April, all 10<sup>th</sup> graders in Mike's school took the WASL. Mike describes, "They were allowed to bring lawn chairs from home for comfort and were bribed with an ice cream party for taking the test." Despite the fact that Mike honored his professional obligations and encouraged students to do well on the test, he was shocked later in May when his principal included a comment in his evaluation that called his "professional judgment" into question. Why? For creating an "atmosphere in the school that was anti-WASL." Mike also received a verbal warning that he was not to carry on anti-WASL activities in the school.

One might assume that an administrator so critical of a teacher being "anti-WASL" would defend and cheer the WASL's great merit, right? Wrong! Behind closed

d o o r s , Mike's principal admitted, "The WASL is a bad test and no one likes it.

Yet, no one seems to be willing to take a stand against it." (?!?) He assured Mike that the WASL would ultimately become watered down and meaningless. He further suggested that Mike just go with the flow to avoid the possible loss of his credentials. Incredulous, Mike agreed not to break the law, to only promote truth in his classroom, and to participate in the administration of the WASL as required by law. He also called NWPE for legal advice.

Mike was informed that his principal had violated a number of RCWs including RCW 28A.405.030. It outlines the *duty* of all teachers "to endeavor to impress on the minds of their pupils the

*principles of morality, truth, justice, temperance, humanity and patriotism; to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity and falsehood; to instruct them in the principles of free government, and to train them up to the true comprehension of the rights, duty and dignity of American citizenship."*

**"When I contacted NWPE, I was immediately referred to legal assistance and received definitive legal information within 24 hours. My problem was solved within 48 hours."**

Mike clearly performed his duty through word *and* action! In fact, RCW 28A.405.040 states that no person teaching in any school in violation of their duty to train (students) up to the true comprehension of the rights, duty and dignity of American citizenship, shall be permitted to teach in any common school in this state! Furthermore, RCW 28.405.050 states that "any school director knowingly permitting any person to teach in any school" in violation of the duties of RCW 28A.405.040, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

**"I am very pleased to be a member of a professional association of this caliber. NWPE promotes quality education and provides quality support for its members."**

Mike was informed that his principal had also violated RCW 28A.405.110 requiring that: (1) An evaluation system must be meaningful, helpful, and objective; and, (2) an evaluation system must encourage improvements in teaching skills, techniques, and abilities by identifying areas needing improvement." Lastly, the principal's negative comment violated RCW 28A.405.100 which specifies that an evaluation must be objective and, for classroom teachers, be developed on the following criteria: classroom management; professional preparation and scholarship; effort toward improvement when needed; the handling of student discipline and attendant problems;

interest in teaching pupils; and knowledge of the subject.

Mike informed his principal that the negative comment in his evaluation violated a number of state statutes according to his NWPE attorney. He respectfully asked that the comment be purged from his evaluation and his principal

promptly agreed to do so. Mike was relieved. "When I contacted NWPE regarding the problem stemming from my WASL stand, I was immediately referred to legal assistance and received definitive legal information within 24 hours. My problem was solved within 48 hours of my call. I am very pleased to be a member of a professional association of this caliber. NWPE promotes quality education and provides quality support for its members."

## A TRUE PROFESSIONAL

We're sorry we can't reveal Mike's true identity. We are extremely proud of Mike and privileged to serve him. He showed tremendous professionalism in pursuing the truth. He taught his students to appreciate and comprehend the rights, duty and dignity of U.S. citizenship by exercising his own rights on an important issue.

"No teacher gives up constitutionally protected free speech when he enters the school doors," says La Rae Munk, Director of Legal Services. Mike "respectfully disagreed with the district's administration of the WASL and tried to change the decision of the administration through the proper channels. Once he learned the decision wasn't going to be changed, he administered the test in compliance with his duties."

Mike is a teacher whom students will remember and emulate. He is true to his calling to help them become good citizens, good workers, and above all else, good people. He is a true patriot and true professional.

## NWPE Scholarships and Mini-Grant Awards for 2002-2003



**Dave Gaston**

**Dave Gaston**, an Olympia School District high school teacher, was awarded a \$500 scholarship for continuing education. The funds will be used to complete coursework for his history endorsement at Pacific Lutheran University.

Gaston notes that being “passionate and knowledgeable” about his subject is important to raise the professionalism of education as his career and will help him make history “come alive” for his students. “I want to pass on my love and enthusiasm for history to my students.”

Gaston has worked in the Olympia School District since 1991 as an Educational Specialist and Special Education Teacher. Prior to his service in Olympia, Dave was an Instructor for Community Based Education Transition Programs in Aberdeen, WA, and Whittier, CA. He provided community referenced instruction for students with multiple handicaps.

Dave taught percussion instruments for eight years at Long Beach City College, CA, and started his own business manufacturing percussion mallets and sticks. Dave has performed with various community orchestras in California.

Dave is a member of NWPE.

**JoAnn Wood**, a 3rd and 4th grade combination teacher in Wilbur School District, was awarded a classroom mini-grant for her Channeled Scablands project at Twin Lakes. JoAnn’s project creatively integrates science, mathematics, and technology with geography, culture, and history of Washington State. According to JoAnn, “This mini-grant will allow my students to ‘experience’ the Channeled Scablands with all their senses, in a way no book, video or computer could. It will bring what we have learned in the classroom ‘to life.’”



**JoAnn Wood**

Because of the Channeled Scablands project and JoAnn’s other environmental education lessons, she is a runner up for U.S. Environmental Educator of the Year sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Association. JoAnn is an associate NWPE member and is past president/treasurer of the Wilbur Teacher Association. She believes that “having a choice of professional organizations grants teachers the freedom to choose an organization that has similar views to their own. It also allows teachers to explore other beliefs and opinions, enabling them to become well rounded and make good decisions.” JoAnn joined NWPE because NWPE’s ideas are similar to hers. “I believe that education should improve a young person’s character as well as intellect.”



**Robin Rust**

**Robin Rust**, a first grade teacher in Sedro-Woolley School District, was awarded a classroom mini-grant to purchase fiction and nonfiction literature to support the class readers that go along with the “Read Well” curriculum she uses with the students in her bridging classroom. She chose materials based upon their relevance to the units as well as for their multi-cultural perspectives.

Robin has a B.A. in Special Education and is currently working on her Master’s Degree in Creative Arts in Learning at Lesley University, Greeley, MA. She is not a member of NWPE.

### 2003-2004 NWPE Scholarship & Classroom Mini-Grant Program

NWPE wants to help educators advance in their professional careers through scholarships that can be used for tuition, books, conferences, workshops, registration fees or travel expenses to professional development activities taking place between September 1 and August 31. NWPE also wants to help educators conduct that special class project they’ve always wanted to do by helping pay for supplies and materials, books, software, equipment, etc.

Awards range from \$200-\$500. All awards are competitive. Both existing and new NWPE members are given first preference, but awards are not limited to members.

Contact NWPE for our brief and simple application. The fall review deadline is October 31.

**Ken Evans**, a sixth grade teacher in the Battle Ground School District, received a classroom mini-grant to help purchase *Corrective Reading, B2: Comprehension Curriculum* for Laurin Middle School. *Corrective Reading* is being used to supplement the sixth grade remedial reading curriculum for students who are reading significantly below grade level and need intervention with a high rate of success.

Ken is a founding member of NWPE and "very proud of it." He cites as one of the main benefits "the outstanding liability insurance, which has a higher level of coverage than provided by WEA. Also, it is nice to network with people who have similar views in regard to working towards the success of all children in public education."



**Del Guenther receiving award for science equipment.**

**Del Guenther**, a Central Valley School District teacher, was awarded a classroom mini-grant to purchase science laboratory equipment for Summit School, a new "School of Choice." As a choice school, students are interviewed for admission and must agree to support the school philosophy and dress standard. Summit School is a non-traditional school that will provide faculty with a high degree of ownership and flexibility to assist students to thrive educationally by concentrating learning in areas of high interest. It was created as a K-8 experiential learning environment. Students will work in a multi-age learning environment. Del served in the Peace Corp in Peru. He taught in Australia and Florida prior to teaching in Spokane. He believes the best way for a teacher to raise the professionalism of educators is to help students produce finished products that are of such high quality that the public will see our profession in a better light. Del is not a member of NWPE.



**Ken Evans**

Ken was appointed to the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board by Governor Gary Locke in July 2000. He is an executive committee member and chairs the subcommittee on the fourth alternate route to certification.

Ken has a love for colonial American history. He has taken on the persona of the Revolutionary War statesman, Patrick Henry, and does presentations in classrooms and within the community. He also does living history at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Ken has aspirations to be a school administrator and is seeking a principal or vice principal position.

**Our common bond is our shared concern for America's children.**

**Sign me up as a NWPE Member:**

- Professional (includes \$2 million liability insurance) \$169
- Student (includes student teaching insurance) \$ 25
- Associate Member (newsletter only) \$ 25

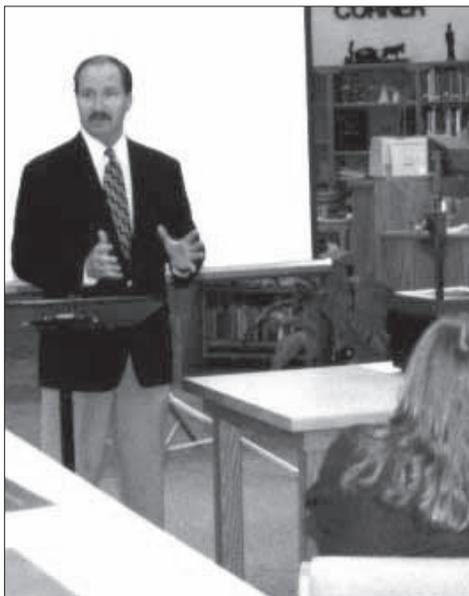
Make check payable to NWPE-AAE. (Contact NWPE to arrange automated bank payment plan of 5 payments.) Mail to: Northwest Professional Educators, P.O. Box 28496, Spokane, WA 99228-8496.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ School E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
 District \_\_\_\_\_ Retired From \_\_\_\_\_  
 County \_\_\_\_\_ ESD \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subject/Grade(s) Taught \_\_\_\_\_  
 Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

## Lynden Teachers Explore Options with NWPE & WEA

Lynden Education Association President Elizabeth Hamming heard her colleagues asking lots of questions about the WEA and NWPE. To clarify what the two organizations offer and how they differ, Elizabeth invited NWPE-AAE leaders and WEA President Charles Hasse to make separate presentations to Lynden educators. On May 6th, Gary Beckner, Executive Director of the Association of American Educators, and Cindy Omlin, NWPE Executive Director, met with teachers. They informed them of NWPE services and answered questions such as those below:

- What is the difference between NWPE, the Association of American Educators (AAE) and the teachers union?
- How can NWPE membership benefit both the nonunion and union member?
- What legal assistance can NWPE provide educators for job related issues and why is it superior to the union's?
- Why is NWPE's liability insurance superior to district, union and homeowner's policies?
- Is NWPE affiliated with the Evergreen Freedom Foundation?
- What options do teachers have for workplace representation, e.g., NEA type union, local only teachers union, faculty senates, other options?
- How can NWPE assist educators who would like to pursue alternatives to the current system of representation?
- What are my rights regarding union membership and funding noncollective bargaining activities?
- How can I exercise my Hudson rights?
- How does NWPE provide me a voice with the legislature?
- What is NWPE's position on the WASL?
- What is NWPE's position on "No Child Left Behind"?
- How is NWPE funded?



*Gary Beckner, Executive Director of AAE, presents information about independent professional teacher organizations.*

Barbara Watson, a new NWPE member from Lynden who attended the meeting, commented afterwards that the NWPE presentation was "very enthusiastic and informative." Barbara says, "I joined NWPE for several reasons. One reason was for the insurance. I also have vastly different ethical convictions than the NEA/WEA. I don't believe any group, such as the NEA, should be allowed to 'force' others to be associated with them, and pay money to them. I am excited that I now have the opportunity to work with a professional organization by choice that will give me the opportunity to have a voice in my professional beliefs without having to support other issues that may compromise my personal beliefs." We welcome Barbara and appreciate the contributions she will make. Says Barbara, "I look forward to working with the NWPE to focus on kids, professionalism, and integrity in any way I can."

Our thanks to Elizabeth Hamming and Lynden's educators for their open-minded look at their options. Please contact NWPE to arrange an informational meeting.

**Director's Message.**  
**Continued from page 1**

WASL and shared it with their colleagues and community. (See related story "NWPE Aids Member when Academic Freedom and Job Threatened for Exposing WASL's Flaws" on page 4.) To view a videotape of Dr. Donald Orlich's WASL presentation, contact NWPE.

**SUPPORTING STUDENTS' EDUCATION.** For some districts, strikes were a big issue in the fall of 2002. All districts had to deal with the January 14<sup>th</sup> WEA Day of Action. In response to WEA's call for a one day work stoppage, NWPE encouraged teachers to follow the law and fulfill teachers' professional responsibility to provide students with uninterrupted education. We published a legal Q & A on strikes that was well received by teachers and administrators. Numerous newspapers published NWPE President Ed Dawson's editorial against strikes, walkouts and other coercive measures.

**PRESENTATIONS TO SUPERINTENDENTS.** Last school year found me traveling the state to various Educational Service District Superintendents' meetings to share NWPE's mission to serve and educate students, educators, and the general public. These meetings were helpful in counteracting false perceptions about NWPE. Despite hearing that some districts were threatened by WEA with unfair labor practice complaints if they distributed NWPE literature (based on the false allegation that NWPE is a competing union), nearly 100 superintendents agreed to distribute NWPE materials in teacher mailboxes.

**SCHOLARSHIPS & CLASSROOM MINI-GRANTS.** All principals in the state received flyers about NWPE's scholarship and classroom mini-grant program. We received nearly 200 requests for applications! Special thanks go to NWPE Board Members Barbara Amidon of Olympia and Carrie Riplinger of Seabeck and former NWPE President Jeff Leer of Mount Vernon who served as the NWPE awards committee.

**Continued on page 9**  
**See Director's Message**

## Does Your Job Evaluation Make the Grade?

Job evaluations should be mutually beneficial tools for principals and teachers to respectfully work together to recognize a teacher's competence and to challenge the teacher to increased levels of proficiency. Sometimes, however, the evaluation can be used inappropriately to punish teachers for personality conflicts or for independent and innovative thinking. If members become concerned that their evaluation has not been appropriately developed, contact NWPE for legal advice.

**From RCW 28A.405.110:** The legislature further finds that an evaluation system for teachers has the following elements, goals, and objectives: (1) An evaluation system must be meaningful, helpful, and objective; (2) an evaluation system must encourage improvements in teaching skills, techniques, and abilities by identifying areas needing improvement; (3) an evaluation system must provide a mechanism to make meaningful distinctions among teachers and to acknowledge, recognize, and encourage superior teaching performance; and (4) an evaluation system must encourage respect in the evaluation process by the persons conducting the evaluations and the persons subject to the evaluations through recognizing the importance of objective standards and minimizing subjectivity.



### Director's Message. Continued from page 8

Consider applying for a scholarship or mini-grant to help *you* fund a special classroom project or attend an educational opportunity. Awards are open to all educators, but NWPE members are given first preference. The fall application deadline is October 31, 2003.

**NWPE SURVEY.** NWPE's survey on educational issues was very popular among members as well as many other teachers who chose to participate. Survey results were compiled for both NWPE members alone as well as for all educators that responded. We are grateful to members Ken Evans of Vancouver and Gina Simmons of Maple Valley for their contributions to the charter school debate. The fascinating results of the survey were shared with legislators, educational agencies, superintendents, teachers, and the media. The entire survey report may be accessed on NWPE's website.

**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STATE LEADERS.** At the invitation of the Washington State House Education Committee, we presented information about NWPE's mission at the

Committee's opening session on January 14<sup>th</sup>. During that visit, NWPE Board Member Barbara Amidon and I also shared our mission with leaders of the State Board of Education, Washington Association of School Administrators, Association of Washington School Principals, and the Washington State School Directors Association. Additionally, NWPE Board President Ed Dawson of Vancouver and member Gina Simmons of Maple Valley informed many senators (including Senate Majority Leader Jim West; Senator Stephen Johnson, Chair, Senate Education Committee, and Senator Marilyn Rasmussen, Education Committee member) about NWPE's mission and issues of concern to our members. They also met with House and Senate Education Committee staff.

**RESPONDING TO WEA PROPAGANDA.** Unfortunately, WEA and many of its local leaders mounted a campaign against NWPE through flyers, the *WEA Action*, and e mails. (This is common practice of the teachers union in states where there are independent professional educators' organizations.) NWPE responded by rebutting the accusations with factual, straightforward information. By arming *you* with information to counteract propaganda, we

hope each of you will promote the truth to your colleagues so that they will feel comfortable turning to NWPE and to *you* for professional support.

**STRENGTHENING NWPE.** In March, I traveled to Gettysburg, PA, for the AAE State Directors Meeting. Dr. Michael Poliakoff, Director of Education Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), presented on opportunities for independent educators to participate in NEH Grant Programs. AAE National Projects Director Tracey Bailey presented on national education issues such as special education, NCLB, and current labor issues. He reported that AAE members' influence is increasing with federal policy makers. Dennis Farrell of Professional Educators of Tennessee presented his study on "Successful Teacher Negotiations" which outlined the relative ineffectiveness of the current union representation model in Tennessee when compared to alternative representation models (such as nonunion faculty senates). Gary Beckner, AAE Executive Director, and numerous state directors shared their strategies to improve services, retention, and recruitment.

**Continued on page 10**  
**See Director's Message**

**Director's Message**  
Continued from page 9

The leaders of our sister AAE affiliates are *very impressed* with the tenacity and professional will that *you* demonstrate in building an independent professional educators' organization—despite the obstacles of forced unionism.



*Your help is needed to host  
NWPE informational gatherings.*

*NWPE can provide a speaker and  
refreshments.*

**E MAIL NETWORKING.** To counteract the WEA's negative campaign against NWPE and to reach educators in districts where the union's threats against districts have blocked distribution of NWPE materials, we periodically e mailed most of the teachers in the state with practical resources, accurate information about NWPE's mission, and educational opportunities. In addition, NWPE initiated an e mail listserve in order to better communicate with mem-

bers, teachers at large, and other interested in education. If your e mail address has changed, please send your new address to info@nwpe.org so that we can keep you informed about educational issues and survey you on your views!

**TEACHER MEETINGS.** In May and June, we began setting up teacher meetings in various school districts.

(See related article on p. 8) Your help is needed to host NWPE informational gatherings. NWPE can provide a speaker and refreshments.

**MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT.** Your help recruiting new NWPE members continues to be critical. To help with this task, the NWPE Board has approved a Member Recruitment Incentive Program that gives financial benefits to both new members and referring members. (See article on p. 3.)

**STAYING FOCUSED ON STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALISM!**

Looking back on education in 2002-2003,

one can't help but see some contrasts. While NWPE promoted students first, professionalism, and building new relationships, other organizations were exercising militant attitudes and actions that interrupted education, strained relationships, and caused increasing damage to the public's view of educators. Striking, advertising against local legislators, and promoting gambling as a way to fund education did nothing to advance teachers' professionalism or students' interests.

NWPE seeks to live out the principles of freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of inquiry by supporting teacher choices in professional associations. We seek the opportunity to advance mutual respect, cooperation, and the exchange of ideas for the sake of our students and for advancing the professionalism of education. Together we will do everything we can to help bring esteem and high regard back to the profession of teaching. Dedication to increased knowledge and skills, helping students produce excellent projects that demonstrate their learning, and putting students' individual needs as teachers' highest priority were common suggestions of our scholarship and mini-grant applicants for improving the professionalism of educators. We agree!

May the 2003-2004 school year bring you and your students great success!

*Cindy Omlin*  
Executive Director

## Charter Schools Update

If Senate Bill 5012 had passed, Washington would have become the 41st state to allow for charter public schools. Although the bill passed the Senate and had the votes to pass in the House, Speaker of the House Frank Chopp did not schedule the bill for a floor vote before the Legislature adjourned.

Most labor unions, including the WEA, opposed the bill. It would have allowed charter school employees to decide, school-by-school, whether to unionize and if so, which union to use. SB5012 would have allowed employees to

choose a new union or no union at all.

Lacking a supermajority vote, NWPE did not take a position on the bill. Fifty one percent of NWPE members favored the charter public school bill; 25% opposed it; and 24% were undecided.

The nonprofit RAND Corporation, hired by the California legislature to study the effectiveness of California's charter schools, released a study June 30th. It found that California's charter schools generally perform as well as non-charter public schools serving similar stu-

dents, even though the charter schools receive significantly less funding.

The study also found that "start-up" charter schools (in contrast to "conversion" charter schools) perform slightly better than district-run public schools serving similar students—despite the fact that the charter schools receive significantly less funding.

Governor Locke continues to support charter schools, listing it among his top legislative priorities in 2004. NWPE

# Is your job safe?? Compare liability insurances!



Your students are on the gym floor doing sit-ups. You casually put your foot on a student's abdomen and make an encouraging remark. The student

laughs. Everything is fine. At the end of the next period, the principal comes to your class claiming the student has accused you of yelling insults at her while standing on her with your full weight. The next day you discover that the parent has filed assault and battery charges. The District suspends you pending an investigation and informs you that you will be interviewed by police.

Scenes like above are played out every day in the Northwest. Teachers are finding themselves exposed to an ever-increasing risk of liability for accusations ranging from assault on a minor to child molestation. Despite the fact that many of these cases turn out to be completely groundless, no teacher has ever emerged completely unscathed after being targeted with a criminal or civil accusation.

Even under the best of circumstances, an accused teacher runs a high risk of a ruined career and a destroyed reputation. Moreover, once criminal charges have been filed, the accused teacher faces the prospect of being convicted of the offenses even if he or she is completely innocent. In fact, convictions sometimes occur even where there is no evidence at all other than the testimony of the child "victim." Once the allegation is made, the teacher often is ostracized by administrators and immediately suspended, pressured to resign, or terminated. In essence, the teacher is abandoned, shunned and discarded by the school district. Making matters worse, the union sometimes aids the district by pressuring an employee to resign instead of helping the teacher!

## HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE.

When faced with a lawsuit many turn, as their first recourse, to their homeowner's policy for protection. Then, often too late, they learn that coverage for such acts fall within a fine print exceptions clause for events that are "work related." Even so-called "umbrella policies" contain similar exclusions for allegations involving willful misconduct—a term which applies to any criminal prosecution.

The advantages to professional liability coverage over a homeowner's policy are myriad. First and foremost, with the scope of teacher liability on the increase, it is all the more imperative to obtain competent and qualified legal representation from an experienced attorney in order to defend against accusations of professional misconduct. Even if coverage is afforded in your homeowner's policy, rarely are you allowed any input into the selection of counsel. In close or questionable coverage questions, your insurance company may defend under what is called a "reservation of rights." This means that after providing you a defense, if you are found liable, they may pay the judgment and then sue you for recovery of the amount awarded.

## DISTRICT & UNION POLICIES.

Although your school district and the union have liability policies, those policies are on the organizations—not the individual teacher! District and union attorneys will advise their clients to represent teachers based on what is in the organization's best interest—not on what is in your best interest.

**NWPE INSURANCE.** Teaching is a specialized profession and requires customized insurance protection. NWPE provides members an individual \$2 million dollar liability policy that also includes provisions to pay legal fees for job protection issues for an independent attorney of the member's choosing. Each member also has access to our Legal Services Department for counsel on school related issues. Director of Legal Services La Rae G. Munk is an attorney with twenty years experience in educa-

Dear NWPE:

Teachers should not think for a moment that they are immune to false accusations from students! I should know. It happened to me in my 29th year of teaching—and the accusation came out of the blue! Even my stellar reputation couldn't save me from patently false allegations!! Following a police investigation which cleared me of any wrongdoing, my NWPE-provided attorney accompanied me to a meeting with administrators. I felt protected knowing the attorney was acting fully on *my* behalf—not looking out for the district. I was reinstated—but not without some tarnish to my reputation.

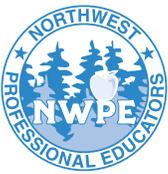
My colleagues now know that each of them is expendable and very at risk. All teachers are. I know. I was one of them. Many of my colleagues who heard what happened were very interested in the representation afforded by NWPE. If NWPE hadn't been there for me with legal advice and the personal liability policy, I'm certain I'd be taking an early retirement now. Thanks for everything!

Roger, NWPE Member

tion and labor law. She thoroughly reviews each member's case and advises the member on a recommended course of action. When a local attorney is needed, NWPE can refer members to competent attorneys. (However, the member is always free to retain the attorney of his/her choice.) The freedom to choose a completely independent attorney whose only interest is in representing YOU and who is not beholden to any organization is what makes NWPE's liability insurance superior to district, union, and homeowner's policies.

Entrusting your career to the hands of the district, the union, or a property and casualty underwriter can be risky. You are encouraged to read policies carefully. Then consult with an attorney or insurance consultant to find out the safest avenue of protection. <sup>NWPE</sup>

—Special thanks to Larry Crain, Chief Legal Counsel for Professional Educators of Tennessee, for his contribution to this article.



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## ***Inside:***

- **\$25 New Member Dues Reduction (p. 3)**
- **Cash Rewards for Growing NWPE (p. 3)**
- **Teacher Threatened for Challenging WASL (p. 4)**
- **NWPE Mini-Grants & Scholarships/Awards (p.6)**
- **Does Your Evaluation Make the Grade? (p. 9)**
- **Is Your Job Safe??  
 Comparing Liability Policies (p. 11)**

## **Focus on effort, not ability**

Two 1998 studies, one from Columbia University and one from the University of Michigan, show students respond better to positive feedback on their efforts rather than on their abilities. In the Columbia study, fifth-graders praised for their intelligence eventually worked less, enjoyed learning less and weren't as persistent. Those praised for their efforts reacted in the opposite manner.

In the Michigan study of middle-school students, those who felt they were in classrooms that emphasized trying hard, self-improvement and risk-taking were more likely to ask for help from their teachers than students in classrooms where they felt the teachers emphasized relative ability and criterion goal setting.

Source: [www.brains.org](http://www.brains.org) (reprinted from ATPE News, Summer 2003) NWPE

*Is this newsletter useful?  
 Share it with your colleagues!*

## **Northwest Professional Educators**

*A Fresh New FACE in Education Leadership!*

**F**ocused on Students  
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