

# MTA Today

A publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association  
Volume 39, No. 3 / December 2008–January 2009

Goal for 2009!

2009

Work together

public

to recession-proof

education!



# GIC proposal an attack on bargaining rights

By Laura Barrett

House Speaker Sal DiMasi has announced that he plans to file a bill in January that would amend the recently passed Group Insurance Commission law by allowing municipalities to unilaterally require employees to receive their health insurance through the GIC.

Under the proposal DiMasi announced on Dec. 8, local governments and other bargaining entities would still have to negotiate the premium split with employees, but they would not have to negotiate over whether to switch to the GIC for health insurance coverage. The MTA strongly opposes this proposal and will continue to defend the new law in its current form.

MTA President Anne Wass said that the speaker's proposal "strikes at the heart of our right to bargain over one of the most important benefits our members receive — health insurance."

"Joining the GIC makes financial sense for some members in some communities, but it isn't the right choice for everyone," Wass added. "That is why it should continue to be subject to careful study and coalition bargaining involving all the public employee unions and retirees in a community."

Recognizing the need to contain and possibly reduce the cost of health insurance for cities and towns, the MTA began working in the fall of 2005

with the Municipal Health Insurance Working Group. The working group, made up of organizations and individuals representing public employees, retirees, cities and towns, legislators and the GIC, met for 18 months to develop a proposal that would allow, but not require, teachers and other municipal employees to receive their health insurance through the GIC.

That bill was approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Deval Patrick on July 25, 2007. Under the law, municipalities and school districts seeking to enter the GIC are allowed to do so each fall after negotiating the change and upon approval by public employee unions and retirees representing 70 percent of those affected. The MTA fully supports the law as enacted. The association's position is as follows:

■ **DiMasi's plan strikes a blow at the heart of employees' fundamental collective bargaining rights.** Collective bargaining is the mechanism through which ordinary workers have meaningful input into what their economic lives will look like. Denying employees the right to have any say over their health insurance plans is an attack on the rights and interests of working people.

■ **Health care benefits are a key component of overall compensation.** Health care benefits are part of an overall compensation package that has been negotiated over many decades. Allowing municipalities to make unilateral decisions about

what health insurance plan to use could cost some employees thousands of dollars per year in increased co-payments and deductibles. Many employees have given up salary increases and other benefits in order to retain good health care benefits.

■ **The new law is fair and is working.** The law establishes a process involving all of the stakeholders in determining whether entering the GIC makes sense. This process includes conducting in-depth analyses of the costs and benefits of the GIC health plans versus those currently offered. After much study and negotiation, 24 cities, towns and regional school districts have now joined the GIC, including several large communities such as Springfield and Quincy.

■ **DiMasi's plan is unnecessary.** The speaker's proposal implies that municipal leaders across the state are seeking to enter the GIC and the local unions are resisting unreasonably. That is not the case. According to health insurance analysts at Boston Benefits Partners, the GIC issue has not even been raised in the vast majority of the state's 351 cities and towns. That may well be because they believe that their own plans are adequate or that competition from the GIC has forced their current insurance providers to lower rates. In the overwhelming majority of instances where a municipality or regional school district has seriously

Please turn to **MTA**/Page 21

## MTA Today

### In this issue

- **MTA member a finalist for NEA Foundation award** 3
- **Editorial: Changing the world — one vote at a time** 4
- **Commentary: 'We have taken a great step forward'** 4
- **Higher ed unions file unfair labor practice charges** 5
- **State gets failing grade for college affordability** 5
- **Members work to 'recession-proof' public education** 6
- **Key proposals likely to advance in 2009** 7
- **MTA recommendations prevail on Election Day** 7
- **In an election year, the world's a classroom** 8
- **Initial TeLLS results now online** 9
- **Conference gives future teachers an inside look** 10
- **New teachers discuss problems, solutions** 11
- **Summer Conference proposals sought** 12
- **Fight to repeal offsets continues** 13
- **Obama says GPO and WEP are unfair to educators** 13
- **Retirement consultations available to members** 14
- **Two teachers win prestigious awards** 15
- **ESP bargaining summit a big success** 16
- **ESP Award nomination forms to be mailed out** 17
- **Are you saving enough on auto insurance?** 18
- **Winter challenges even the best drivers** 18
- **Higher ed appointees have ties to UMass** 21
- **State results 'spectacular' on TIMSS tests** 21
- **MTA election info available on Web** 23
- **CEPP wins top awards in NSAI competition** 24
- **Obituaries** 25
- **Classifieds** 26
- **Music Matters visit inspires second-graders** 28
- **MTA partnerships promote student achievement** 28

**This issue of MTA Today also includes the winter edition of the MTA Advantage.**



**The Massachusetts Teachers Association**  
20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108  
800.392.6175 or 617.742.7950  
FAX: 617.742.7046  
www.massteacher.org



MTA TODAY, ISSN 08982481, is published bimonthly by the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Subscription: \$2.70 of MTA members' dues is designated for MTA Today.

Periodicals postage rates paid at Boston, MA, and at additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Massachusetts Teachers Association, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

Copyright ©2008-2009 by the Massachusetts Teachers Association. All material in this periodical may be reproduced by teachers for distribution to students or by affiliate associations for their own publications. Unless expressly stated, acceptance of advertising does not necessarily imply endorsement of the product by MTA or MTA Benefits.

### MTA's Mission Statement

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is a member-driven organization, governed by democratic principles, that accepts and supports the interdependence of professionalism and unionism. The MTA promotes the use of its members' collective power to advance their professional and economic interests. The MTA is committed to human and civil rights and advocates for quality public education in an environment in which lifelong learning and innovation flourish.

**MTA President**  
Anne Wass

**MTA Vice President**  
Paul Toner

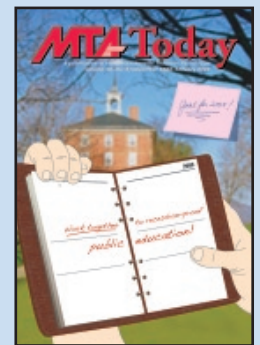
**Executive Director-Treasurer**  
David A. Borer

**Communications Director/Editor**  
James Sacks

**Staff Assistant**  
Janice Morrissey

**Publisher**  
David A. Borer

### On the cover



Election Day delivered great results for students and public education. Question 1, the Income Tax Repeal Initiative, was soundly defeated, and voters sent Senator Barack Obama to the White House for four years while also electing many other MTA-recommended candidates. But given the massive economic problems facing the state and the nation, 2009 is certain to be a challenging year — a period in which MTA members will need to do all they can to "recession-proof" public education. See pages 6 and 7 for information on the election results and a look at what lies ahead.

Cover design by Lisa Rosowsky

### Quote-Unquote

*"Students in Massachusetts and Minnesota ... also demonstrated stellar achievement, outperforming classmates in all but a handful of countries."*

— Excerpt from a story in *The New York Times* on December 10 about the results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

# Excellence in action

MTA member wins Horace Mann Award, becomes finalist for NEA Foundation honor

By Bob Duffy

**M**ichael Flynn is an elementary school teacher, a public servant and an ardent advocate for public education and students.

He is the 2008 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year and a participant in education reform efforts at the state level.

Now he has added to the list another significant achievement by becoming a recipient of the Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence and a national finalist for the NEA Foundation's Award for Teaching Excellence.

As one of five finalists, Flynn will receive \$10,000 from the Horace Mann Companies and will travel to the nation's capital in February to attend the foundation's annual Salute to Excellence in Education Gala.

Flynn told *MTA Today* that his selection as a finalist for the foundation honor came as a surprise.

"I was happy simply being nominated for the award, and I never expected it to go any further," Flynn said. "Regardless of what happens in D.C., this has been a great experience, and I've grown a lot professionally as a result."

In all, 36 public school educators from around the country were nominated to receive the excellence award. Each nominee's school will receive a \$750 award in his or her honor.

MTA President Anne Wass said that members in Flynn's home state are thrilled about his status as a potential winner of the national award and are looking forward to the gala.

"We are very proud that Michael has been selected as a finalist and will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the entire nation the incredible devotion, expertise and caring that Massachusetts educators provide to our state's public school students," Wass said.

Flynn, who lives in Florence, normally teaches second grade at the Southampton Elementary School. But as the Teacher of the Year, he is doing a

'It's critically important that educators stay active and informed about what is happening in the public policy arena because it is too late to shape the policy by the time it makes its way to the classroom.'

— Teacher Michael Flynn



lot of public speaking these days and working as the teacher in residence at Westfield State College. He will return to his classroom in the fall.

Flynn said that while the road to becoming a finalist for the NEA award was rigorous, the process was a "powerful experience." It included an essay and a series of interviews, he noted.

"As teachers, we are so focused on our students and the day-to-day business of teaching that we often don't have time to reflect as well as we should," Flynn said. "You learn a lot about yourself as a teacher when you have to write about what you do and why you do it."

Flynn, who was drawn to a teaching career when he was in high school, chose elementary education in part due to the shortage of male teachers in the lower grades. He is a big believer in developing lesson plans that apply the subject matter at hand to the real world.

He also believes that educators have an obligation to be advocates for their profession.

Flynn was actively involved in the recent effort to defeat Question 1, a state ballot initiative that would have eliminated the Massachusetts income tax. He worked hard to educate the public about the potentially devastating effects of the proposal, providing an educator's perspective on radio talk shows and joining a media "truth squad" that helped set the record straight during a rally sponsored by Question 1 proponents.

He said that in this era of never-ending educational change, educators need to find ways to make their voices heard.

"It's critically important that educators stay active and informed about what is happening in the public policy arena because it is too late to shape the policy by the time it makes its way to the classroom," Flynn said.

Flynn remains active in local municipal government and is also trying to shape the next round of education reform in Massachusetts. He served on the Governor's Readiness Leadership Council several

months ago and is now a member of the Readiness Finance Commission.

Pointing out that he was the only active teacher appointed to these groups, Flynn said that while participants from the community and the business world may have the best of intentions, they can sometimes forget that students are individuals.

"When education stakeholders conduct these public policy discussions, the human nature of children can be lost in a cookie-cutter mentality," he said. "My teacher voice reminds them to put a human face on the students."

Flynn plans to bring his wife, Theresa, and his parents to the NEA event, which will be held at the National Building Museum on Feb. 6.

The other four finalists for the excellence award are:

- Joseph Fatheree, a multi-media and Web design teacher at Effingham High School in Effingham, Ill.

- Richard T. Ognibene, Jr., a grade 11-12 chemistry and physics teacher at Fairport High School in Fairport, N.Y.

- Stephanie Rossi, a grade 10-12 teacher at Wheat Ridge Senior High School in Wheat Ridge, Colo.

- Marlene Srock, a first-grade teacher at Bel Air Elementary School in Minot, N.D.

"These extraordinary teachers challenge students and encourage them to reach their full potential," said NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. "They are representatives of the vast number of school employees who go to school each morning dedicated to creating great public schools for every student."

The NEA Foundation is a nonprofit organization created in 1969 by association members and sustained by contributions from educators, corporate sponsors and other supporters of public education. The foundation offers grants and programs that support educators' efforts to close the achievement gaps, increase classroom innovation, salute excellence in education and provide professional development. For more information, visit [www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org).

**Teachers at Masconomet Regional High School and the Marion E. Zeh Elementary School in Northborough win top awards.**

— See story on Page 15

MTA members can now choose to stop receiving the printed edition of *MTA Today* and *instead* be notified by e-mail when the magazine is posted in PDF form on the MTA Web site. To take this step, please visit:

[www.massteacher.org/emtatoday](http://www.massteacher.org/emtatoday)

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





# Changing the world — one vote at a time

*A note of gratitude for MTA members' decisive efforts on Question 1*

**T**hank you.

The world moves at such a fast pace, we often forget to slow down enough to express our appreciation for the hard work of others, so that's what I would like to do now.

To all the members who made phone calls, held signs, participated in 10-minute meetings, spoke out in public, led action teams, sent e-mails, planted lawn signs



Anne Wass  
MTA President

or simply talked about Question 1 with friends and neighbors, thank you.

To all the MTA staff who worked extra long hours to organize locals, distribute buttons, assemble signs, draft talking points, reach out to other unions, design TV ads, provide legal advice, staff phone banks, develop campaign strategies and so much more, thank you.

Staff and members who were leaders in this campaign have been thanked in other forums. Here, I would like to acknowledge the unsung heroes, the people who did what was asked of them — and more — to make sure that this ballot question was not just defeated, but was crushed.

I'm thinking, for example, of Shauna Manning, a UMass Boston staff member

So we pushed on and so did you. As the number of individual actions grew over time, the number of 'no' votes gradually increased. We were optimistic that we would win, but we didn't know by how much.

who used one of her personal days on Nov. 4 so she could stand at the polls holding a "No on 1" sign. Thank you, Shauna.

And then there is a New Bedford teacher — I didn't catch her name — who told me she organized a dinner party for her husband's friends and their wives. They had not socialized as a group in the past, but since all the others were planning to vote "yes," she decided to bring them together. After a lively debate over dinner, she chalked up nine more "no" votes for the cause. Not only that, they had such a good time they plan to socialize again in the future. We hope that she and others will maintain the connections they built during this campaign. And thank you.

I also heard about Bill and Grace Day from Mashpee, who held signs outside the Christmas Tree Shop at the Sagamore Bridge. Although they are retired teachers and therefore had less at stake personally

in the vote, Grace explained why they were there: "It's such an outrageous proposal that would be so hurtful to so many people. I felt I couldn't just sit by and do nothing." Thank you, Bill and Grace.

When polling was first done on Question 1, the "yes" and "no" votes were nearly equally divided, with a large number of people still undecided. The pollsters warned us that it would be very difficult to drive the "yes" vote below 40 percent on a tax cut question. After all, when an identical question was on the ballot in 2002, it won 45 percent of the vote.

We felt we couldn't afford such a narrow victory again. We needed a decisive win to convince legislators that the public really does care about quality public education and other services.

So we pushed on and so did you. As the number of individual actions grew over time, the number of "no" votes gradually increased. We were optimistic that we would win, but we didn't know by how much.

Finally the totals were posted on election night: 70 percent "no" to 30 percent "yes." I was elated, and I am sure many of you were, as well.

The grassroots activism behind this victory makes me think of something that the anthropologist Margaret Mead once said: "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

*Thank you.*

## Commentary

# As human beings, we have taken a great step forward

By Jim Reynolds

**November 5, 2008** — My freshman students and I have just finished a unit on Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. We have also studied a number of racial tragedies from our nation's past during the current unit, including the stories of Emmett Till, the Scottsboro Trial and Ruby Bridges. Today, we discussed the significance of Norman Rockwell's poignant painting "A Problem We All Live With."

It seems racism has been a dominant theme in my English classes this first quarter — a topic that most people (including this writer) have a hard time addressing in an open forum.

In the aftermath of yesterday's election, I had an opportunity for a significant "teachable moment" due to the fact that Barack Obama has been chosen to be the next president of our great nation. This auspicious occasion helped to illustrate to my students just how far we have come as a society toward fighting racial injustice, stereotypes and prejudices — and toward becoming better human beings.



Jim Reynolds

I immediately thought of the scene in Lee's novel in which Jem and Scout are upset about the verdict in the Tom Robinson case and their neighbor, Miss Maudie, explains, "We can't win ... but we're making a step."

With the election of the first African-American to the presidency, we as a nation are indeed "making a step."

But where do we go from here? Will there finally be an open national discourse on race? Will other racial barriers continue to be examined, tested and broken? Will there be a paradigm shift in the consciousness of our society? Will we ever truly overcome our deep-rooted historical prejudices?

The reality is that one leader cannot accomplish this alone; it depends on those of us willing to face our fears and examine our cores. As Obama, himself, stated during the primaries: "If you are on the right path and you are willing to keep walking, eventually you will make progress."

How many of us are willing to keep walking? Only time will tell.

Obama's platform was accented by the slogan "Change we can believe in," but, as one insightful NBC commentator noted, "Change is inevitable. It is growth that is optional."

Many people have asked if this election was about race. I would say yes, it was. It was about the human race. And we, as human beings, have taken a great step forward.

*Reynolds, who lives in Egremont, is an English teacher at Pittsfield High School and a member of the United Educators of Pittsfield.*

### Letters policy

**M**TA Today welcomes letters to the editor from MTA members. Letters should be no longer than 200 words. Each letter submitted for publication must address a topic covered in *MTA Today*, must be signed and must include the writer's telephone number for confirmation purposes. Opinions must be clearly identified as belonging to the letter-writer. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and style. For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted at [www.massteacher.org/news/mta\\_today](http://www.massteacher.org/news/mta_today).



# Higher education unions charge state with violating collective bargaining law

By Sarah Nathan

Frustrated by stalled contract talks, two MTA public higher education affiliates are formally charging their state employer for the second time in recent months with failing to bargain in good faith.

On Dec. 9, the union representing faculty and librarians on the Amherst and Boston campuses of the University of Massachusetts filed unfair labor practice charges with the state Division of Labor Relations. The Massachusetts Society of Professors at UMass Amherst and the Faculty Staff Union at UMass Boston allege that their employer of record, the UMass Board of Trustees, offered a salary increase and then effectively reneged on it.

“We have an obligation to tell our employers, the UMass trustees and the state, that what they are doing is illegal,” said MSP President Max Page. “This economic crisis does not give them the right to violate our state’s collective bargaining law.”

In August, 11 MTA affiliates separately charged their respective state employers, the UMass trustees and the state Board of Higher Education, which bargains for the state and community colleges, with bad-faith bargaining. At that time, neither the trustees nor the BHE had put forth any salary offer.

Within a few weeks of the filings, both boards offered modest salary increases to several of the MTA-affiliated unions. In October, however, an official representative of the university system informed the MTA that he had “no authority to honor the salary offer.” Around that time, the MTA was informed by a high-ranking member of Governor Deval Patrick’s budget office that contract talks involving all salary and economic matters were on hold. As *MTA Today* went to press, the state-imposed ban had not been lifted.

“After we filed the first round of unfair labor practice charges, a minimal salary offer was finally made,” Page said. “Recognizing the state is

‘After we filed the first round of unfair labor practice charges, a minimal salary offer was finally made. Recognizing the state is facing difficult economic times, we accepted that offer and were surprised and disturbed when told that negotiators could not discuss economics at the table. In my mind, this is a classic example of bad-faith bargaining.’

—MSP President Max Page

facing difficult economic times, we accepted that offer and were surprised and disturbed when told that negotiators could not discuss economics at the table. In my mind, this is a classic example of bad-faith bargaining.”

The agreements with all but one MTA affiliate currently in negotiations expired on July 1. The state’s contract with the Association of Professional Administrators expired on the last day of 2007. Despite months of negotiations, the first salary offer wasn’t made until September.

Hearings on the first round of charges are scheduled at the labor relations division in December.

Since contract talks began, the state’s economic picture has worsened. To address a major budget deficit, Patrick has slashed \$755 million in state funding, including \$48.2 million earmarked for public higher education. As a result, the 29 public higher education campuses in Massachusetts were hit with a 5 percent budget cut midway through the current fiscal year.

While personnel were spared on most public higher education campuses, UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan said UML could not absorb a \$4 million cut without a reduction in force. On Dec. 2, he announced a major layoff, affecting approximately 52 full-time employees and 20 part-time employees. Of the jobs slashed, five were held by MTA members.

Among the possible causalities is the Labor Extension Program, staffed by highly skilled labor educators who provide educational services and

technical assistance to unions across the region. While Meehan cut off university funding for this program and several others, he has offered affected staff the opportunity to remain on campus if funding can be obtained from outside sources.

The four-person labor extension staff includes two members of the Grant and Contract Funded Employees Association.

GRACE President Tom Estabrook raised serious concerns about the administration’s decision to cut programs that provide services to the greater Lowell community. He said it calls into question the university’s commitment to support a mix of “corporate, community and social projects.”

“It’s part of its obligation as a public institution,” he said, noting that there is a real fear that university funding for other key educational and community initiatives will be slashed in the coming year. He pointed to the Tsongas Center for Industrial History as an important community resource for students and teachers that relies primarily on university funding.

“It was a painful process, and I wish there had been more time for the unions to meet with the administration before final decisions were made,” said Classified/Technical Union President Christos Protonotarios, who filed a grievance challenging the process and procedures used by UML. “My union was never given a sufficient opportunity to bargain, as is outlined in our contract.”

Jobs held by three CTU members were among those cut. Protonotarios,

however, is currently in negotiations with the administration and is hopeful that he’ll be able to make appropriate accommodations for the affected members.

To prepare for future battles and stave off additional job and program cuts, Estabrook and Protonotarios are reaching out to other union leaders on campus.

“We have to find a way for all the unions on campus to work together,” Estabrook said. “We will all be better off if we stand together and approach the administration with a shared strategy and a united front.”

At the same time the public higher education campuses are facing additional budget cuts, enrollment is at an all-time high. According to estimates released by the Department of Higher Education, there were more students enrolled as undergraduates at the state’s public colleges and UMass this September than in any other fall term in the history of the Massachusetts public higher education system. According to the DHE statistics, the number of undergraduate students is up by 4.2 percent from the previous year and has increased by 18.2 percent over 10 years.

By segment, the state’s 15 community colleges are experiencing the biggest jump in enrollment from the last academic year to the current one — 5.3 percent, or 4,479 students. Enrollment at the five UMass campuses is up by 3.4 percent, and enrollment is up 3 percent at the nine state colleges. Average year-to-year increases over the last decade have been approximately 1 percent.

While the increase in the number of undergraduates enrolling in public higher education in Massachusetts is positive news, there are real questions about how the faculty and staff can continue to accommodate more students with reduced resources.

“Enrollment in our state’s community colleges is at an all-time high, yet the threat of layoffs and increased

Please turn to **Hard times**/Page 16

## Massachusetts gets failing grade for college affordability

By Sarah Nathan

Massachusetts earned an F for college affordability in a recent report on higher education by the nonprofit Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

The biennial study, released in December, offers some daunting statistics for Massachusetts families. It states that even with financial aid, poor and working-class families must devote 49 percent of their income to enroll a student in the University of Massachusetts or one of the state’s four-year colleges.

The report, *Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education*, compared the state to others and found that “families in

Massachusetts devote a very large share of family income, even after financial aid, to attend public two-year, public four-year, and private four-year colleges and universities in the state.”

The report also noted that despite Massachusetts’ increased investment in need-based financial aid, the burden on families remains comparatively large.

According to *Measuring Up*, the cost of two-year public colleges in the state has risen from 18 percent to 26 percent of family income since 2000. During the same period, the cost of four-year public colleges increased from 21 percent to 32 percent. The report measures net college costs — meaning a year’s tuition, fees, room and board,

minus financial aid — against family income.

The study gave Massachusetts an A in the preparation, completion and benefits categories, but awarded a B-minus for participation, noting that the state could do more to provide college opportunities to all of its residents. Specifically, it cited working-age adults and young adults who are Hispanic and African-American.

Massachusetts was one of 49 states to earn an F for affordability. The number of states failing in the affordability category is up from 2006, when 43 states earned failing grades.

“*Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education*” can be found at [measuringup2008.highereducation.org/index.php](http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/index.php).



# Best of times, worst of times

With election victories in hand, members work to 'recession-proof' public education

By Laura Barrett

The opening sentence from *A Tale of Two Cities* seemed very on point this fall: *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.*

The MTA played a key role in the defeat of Question 1, which lost by an astounding 40-point margin. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, recommended by both the MTA and the NEA, won handily in Massachusetts — as expected — and by a healthy margin across the country. Many MTA members were jubilant about both victories.

But the joy was tempered by worry as the stock market continued to drop, unemployment rose and the deficit projection for the state topped \$2 billion out of a \$29 billion budget.

The MTA's priority for 2009 will be to try to "recession-proof" public education and public higher education by staving off as many cuts as possible and laying the groundwork for a comeback in the future, according to MTA President Anne Wass.

"Election night was fabulous," Wass said. "It was an amazing triumph of hope over cynicism. It was hard to come back down to earth to deal with the reality that we face some very difficult times ahead of us."

Wass said that the defeat of Question 1, the ballot initiative to eliminate the Massachusetts income tax, was a testament to the hard work of MTA members and staff and other opponents of the proposal, as well as to the common sense of the voters. Question 1 was defeated in every city and town in the Commonwealth, going down 70 percent to 30 percent statewide.

MTA members of all types participated extensively in both internal and external campaign efforts.

Internally, they formed action teams in their schools and on college campuses, made phone calls with particular emphasis on retired members and education support professionals and registered students to vote. Externally, they participated in community phone-banking, held signs at busy intersections and near polling stations and contacted family members and friends to urge them to vote "no."

Members' dues also enabled the MTA to make a substantial contribution to the Coalition for Our Communities, an umbrella group that included organizations from throughout Massachusetts. Coalition activities included producing and airing television and radio ads and sending direct mail pieces to registered voters about the harm the initiative would cause.

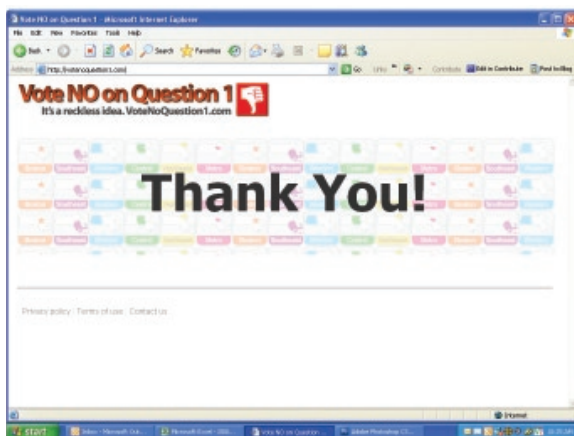
As gratifying as it was to defeat Question 1, the victory didn't bring any new money to public education; it simply deflected a wrecking ball that would have done untold damage to the state's schools and colleges.

Although Chapter 70 state aid for public schools was spared in the round of mid-year budget cuts enacted in October, schools are already feeling the impact of ongoing fiscal problems, coupled with cuts in education grant programs.

At the higher education level, state and community colleges and the University of Massachusetts took a 5 percent mid-year cut that is now being implemented.

"Next year is going to be even more difficult," Wass said. "We intend to push the governor and Legislature hard to protect our schools and colleges from budget cuts."

"Having a substandard education for even just one year can affect children for the rest of their



Many MTA members were active in the "Vote No on Question 1" campaign. One location for visibilities was the Airport Rotary in Barnstable, where members and supporters joined Barnstable Teachers Association President Jeff Morassi, second from left in foreground, in making their sentiments clear. At right, Barack Obama drew huge crowds as he rolled to victory in the presidential election. Above, the Coalition for Our Communities posted a message that said it all: "Thank You!"

Photos by Laura Barrett and Rick Friedman



lives," she continued. "And college students should have access to affordable, high-quality public higher education, both for their own sake and for the sake of our economy."

Governor Deval Patrick has said he hopes to protect Chapter 70 and local aid from budget cuts in the coming year. Although the economic crisis is causing both Patrick and the MTA to scale back expectations for funding major new initiatives, there are still a number of education proposals under consideration.

The state concerns are mirrored on the federal level. Many educators have great hopes for President-elect Obama, but are also concerned that he faces so many challenges that education may not get quick attention.

Reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind act, currently behind schedule, is likely to engender a great deal of debate, as it has in the past.

During the campaign, Obama stated that he believed the law was under-funded and too narrowly focused on the results of standardized tests. But

observers do not expect NCLB to be considered early in Obama's term, given the crises he will be facing when he takes office.

Obama is also a strong supporter of early childhood education. He has proposed a \$4,000 tax credit for college students who agree to perform 100 hours of community service and has pledged to simplify the process of applying for federal financial aid. Like the MTA and the NEA, he opposes school vouchers.

There are some areas in which his positions differ from the MTA's. Obama is a strong supporter of charter schools and is interested in exploring "pay for performance" for teachers, though he has said that any such programs should be implemented with teachers' support, not over their objections.

"Despite the many challenges we face, I have a lot of hope for the future," Wass said. "I'm proud of our members and proud of the voters for the decisions they made on Question 1 and in the presidential election. In the long run, I believe these decisions will put public education in our state and country on the right track."



# Key proposals likely to advance in 2009

By Laura Barrett

While education funding is expected to be the biggest concern next year, advocacy organizations and state officials are still promoting proposals that they believe will improve student learning. The MTA will be tracking these proposals and others and will be seeking input from members on them as the plans are developed and the agenda takes shape.

## 21st century skills

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Task Force on 21st Century Skills issued a report in November calling on educators to "dramatically change their thinking and expectations of public education by integrating the use of 21st century skills in every subject and at every grade."

These skills, which the task force deems necessary for the current and future job markets, emphasize thinking creatively, working collaboratively, using technology to solve problems and taking initiative.

The section of this plan receiving the most media attention would revamp the MCAS graduation requirement to include more classroom-based assessments, such as laboratory experiments in science and oral presentations in history. Although these new assessments would be in addition to rather than instead of the paper-and-pencil MCAS tests, a number of standardized test supporters have criticized the plan.

Jamie Gass, director of the Center for School Reform at the Pioneer Institute, told *The Boston*

Some components of the governor's 55-point Readiness Project appear to be on the back burner due to the Commonwealth's current fiscal problems. Nonetheless, Secretary of Education Paul Reville has told MTA leaders he is planning to push ahead with several ideas, including Readiness Schools.

*Globe*: "What we are seeing here is an incremental dismantling of education reform that has made Massachusetts the highest-performing state in the country."

MTA Vice President Paul Toner, a member of the task force, disagreed. He said that measuring these kinds of skills is "a step in the right direction."

The MTA has long expressed concern that placing too much emphasis on the paper-and-pencil MCAS tests in their current form narrows the curriculum and has a negative impact on some students. The MTA supports assessing — and teaching — the broad range of problem-solving skills required for success in today's global economy.

## Readiness Schools

Some components of the governor's 55-point Readiness Project appear to be on the back burner due to the Commonwealth's current fiscal problems. Nonetheless, Secretary of Education Paul Reville has told MTA leaders he is planning to push ahead with several ideas, including Readiness Schools.

Readiness Schools are to be semi-autonomous schools within public school districts. The administration has said that school faculty would have to approve any plan that was implemented in their schools.

As of this writing, a final bill had not been drafted. However, the MTA has expressed concern that early written descriptions of the plan call for limiting collective bargaining in these schools to wages, benefits and due process related to dismissals. MTA members will be updated as discussions proceed.

## Educator quality

The MTA is part of a broad coalition that is continuing to push for improvements in educator training, licensing, mentoring, evaluation and support. The goal is to improve student learning by improving the quality of instruction. Given current fiscal constraints, it is considered unlikely that any major statewide programs along these lines will be approved in the coming year. But the coalition is continuing to push for teacher quality improvements to be embedded in future reform efforts or adopted on a pilot basis.

## Advanced Placement initiative

Massachusetts is one of seven states participating in a privately funded program to expand the number and quality of Advanced Placement science, mathematics and English courses in schools that currently have limited offerings. A grant awarded to the Commonwealth and Mass Insight Education for the Massachusetts

Please turn to **MTA**/Page 19

# MTA recommendations prevail on Election Day

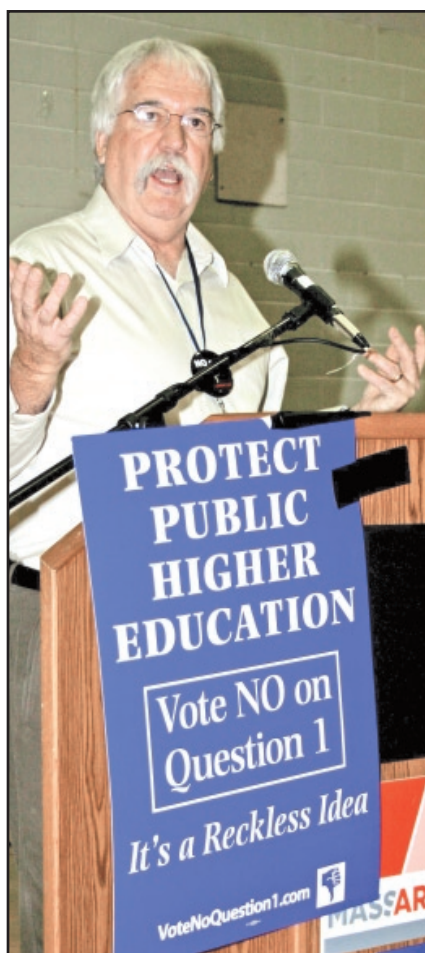


Photo by Laura Barrett

Rick McDermott, interim president of the Association of Professional Administrators, addresses staff and students at the Massachusetts College of Art during a forum on the Income Tax Repeal Initiative.

By Meg Secatore

From the top of the ballot to Question 1, the MTA was victorious on Election Day.

The election of Barack Obama and Joe Biden as president and vice president and the re-election of U.S. Senator John F. Kerry were victories for MTA-recommended candidates. In addition, all MTA-recommended members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation were re-elected. They include John Olver, 1st District; Richard Neal, 2nd District; Jim McGovern, 3rd District; Barney Frank, 4th District; Niki Tsongas, 5th District; John Tierney, 6th District; Ed Markey, 7th District; Michael Capuano, 8th District; and William Delahunt, 10th District.

As Question 1, the Income Tax Repeal Initiative, was going down to a sound and well-deserved defeat, recommended candidates also were carrying the day in 36 of the 37 contests for the Legislature in which the MTA took sides.

"All of our recommended candidates understand that children get one chance at a great education and that we need to do everything we can to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed," said MTA President Anne Wass. "With the terrible economic outlook, the next legislative session could be our most



Photo by Meg Secatore

Norwood Teachers Association President Jody Smith, left, and Vice President Anne Watson hold signs near the Norwood town common.

challenging. We need to move forward and forge great working relationships with all of our representatives.

"This is true not only on Beacon Hill but in home districts, where MTA members will be opening or strengthening communication with our legislators so our students' interests are always in the forefront," Wass added.

The following MTA-recommended candidates for the state Senate were elected on Nov. 4: Ken Donnelly, 4th Middlesex; Jamie Eldridge, Middlesex and Worcester; Susan Fargo, 3rd Middlesex; John Hart, First Suffolk; Michael Moore, 2nd Worcester; Stan Rosenberg, Hampshire and Franklin; and Jim Timilty, Bristol and Norfolk.

The following recommended candidates for the state House of Representatives were elected: Jim Arciero, 2nd Middlesex; Brian Ashe, 2nd Hampden; Cory Atkins, 14th Middlesex; Demetrius Atsalis, 2nd Barnstable; Jen Benson, 37th Middlesex; Bill Bowles, 2nd Bristol; Mike Brady, 9th Plymouth; Linda Dean Campbell, 15th Essex; Jim Cantwell, 4th Plymouth; Cheryl Coakley-Rivera, 10th Hampden; Tom Conroy, 13th Middlesex; Chris Donelan, 2nd Franklin; Joe Driscoll, 5th Norfolk; Carolyn Dykema, 8th Middlesex; Lori Ehrlich, 8th Essex; Anne Gobi, 5th Worcester; Mary Grant, 6th Essex; Bill Greene, 22nd

Please turn to **Recommended**/Page 19



# In an election year, the world's a classroom

By Laura Barrett

It has been a good year to teach government, in the view of John Dickson, a popular teacher at Harwich High School.

His students agree. Several in his U.S. government class said they were interested in the presidential election even before the fall term started, but virtually all of them were hooked by the time Election Day rolled around.

"I never liked history all through high school. It was my least favorite subject," said Katie Callaghan. "But I like government so much. We're able to be more involved. We're not just sitting there reading a book and memorizing facts; we're able to be part of it."

Being "part of it" has included conducting exit polls, drafting and voting on "bills" and experiencing the Iowa caucuses through Dickson's eyes — among other non-traditional educational experiences.

Harwich High may be one of the few schools in the state that has long required students to take four years of history and social studies, including a mandatory government class in their senior year.

Eleanor Roosevelt would have been pleased. In an essay titled "Good Citizenship: The Purpose of Education," first published in 1930, she wrote in part:

*[C]itizens must understand their government from the smallest election district to the highest administrative office. It must be no closed book to them, and each one must carry his own particular responsibility or the whole army will lag.*

*"I would have our children visit national shrines, know why we love and respect certain men of the past. I would have them see how government departments are run and what are their duties, how courts function, what juries are, what a legislative body is and what it does.*

Dickson and his Harwich colleagues attempt to make all this come alive by immersing their students in



Photos by Laura Barrett

Teacher John Dickson and senior Ben Bianco listen to discussion during a U.S. government class at Harwich High School. Dickson places a high priority on student participation. Standing in front of the map are students Emily Reed, left, and Katie Callaghan, both of whom said they enjoyed conducting exit polls on Election Day. The results of student polls from this year and previous elections can be found on the Web at [www.harwich.edu/depts/history/dickson/gov.html](http://www.harwich.edu/depts/history/dickson/gov.html).

current events. What better time to do that than in this historic election year?

There were several highlights in Dickson's class, starting last January when he traveled to Iowa for three days to videotape, photograph and report on the caucuses and campaigns for his class.

"I blogged and did conference calls with all my classes," said Dickson, who teaches psychology as well as government. "I saw rallies with seven different candidates and attended a caucus in Johnson, Iowa. We also had a chance to go to Obama's headquarters in Chicago."

Throughout the fall, his students studied all of the candidates and issues on the Massachusetts ballot, including county races and initiatives.

"By the time it comes to a vote, our students know more about the ballot than anyone else," Dickson said. "My hope is that they get in the habit of learning about everything on the ballot."

During election years, Dickson's government classes invite candidates to participate in debates, and this year was no exception.

Dickson's students asked the questions during a debate between state representative candidates Sarah Peake and Don Howell.

His students became even more active participants on Election Day itself, when many of them stood at the polls and conducted exit surveys. They did this even though it was officially a holiday from school.

Emily Reed stood at the polls most of the day, and Callaghan was there for about an hour. They asked voters a series of questions about whom they voted for, their political party, age, positions on the ballot questions and so on.

"I was pretty surprised to have people come up to me and say, 'Can I answer some questions?'" Callaghan remarked. "I was expecting a completely different response. You

learn a lot about people by doing this. I questioned some people I knew, but I learned things about them that I never knew."

Reed agreed that most people were willing to participate, though she said a few declined.

They tabulated the results and posted them on the class Web site. Their polling showed Obama beating McCain by more than two to one. The students also had to write papers about what factors they believe influenced how people voted.

When this *MTA Today* reporter visited Dickson's class in December, the students were debating amendments to the student handbook proposed by their peers. They were divided into the House and Senate and broke into committees to consider the proposals.

A House committee quickly rejected a proposal to start and end school an hour later because that

Please turn to **Election**/Page 20

FEBRUARY IS

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

To find educational resources on Black History Month and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which is January 19, please visit the following link on the MTA Web site:

[http://massteacher.org/teaching/links/links\\_spec\\_bhm.cfm](http://massteacher.org/teaching/links/links_spec_bhm.cfm)

# Initial TeLLS results now online

By Laura Barrett

An interim report based on the statewide results of the Massachusetts Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey — Mass TeLLS — is now posted online at [www.masstell.org](http://www.masstell.org), providing important information about the views of teachers and administrators in schools throughout the Commonwealth.

More than 40,000 educators in Massachusetts took the survey in early 2008, responding to questions about the teaching, learning and leading conditions in their buildings. Among other issues, the survey focused on empowerment, facilities and resources, professional development and the use of time.

The final report — which will include an analysis of MCAS results as they relate to the survey, as well as interstate comparisons — is scheduled to be completed in early January. When it is released, the data for all schools and districts in which 40 percent or more of the educators completed surveys will be available to the public and the media.

“The purpose of Mass TeLLS is to identify strengths and weaknesses at the school, district and state levels in order to improve education policies and practices in the state,” said MTA



President Anne Wass. “We are urging all of our members in participating schools to review the results with their school leadership teams and figure out how to address any concerns that are raised.”

Kathleen Skinner, director of the MTA’s Center on Education Policy and Practice, said that the CEPP provided intensive training on use of the data to four districts over the summer, as well as regional training seminars during the fall.

The final regional training will take place on Jan. 15. (For details, go to [www.massteacher.org/tellstraining](http://www.massteacher.org/tellstraining).)

Overall, the survey revealed that most teachers believe that their schools are good places to work. But many raised concerns about leadership, teacher empowerment and the atmosphere of trust and respect in their schools. The following are some of the findings highlighted in the interim report.

**Educators have a strong commitment to their work and**

**their schools.** Seventy-seven percent believe their schools are good places to work and learn, and 83 percent plan to continue working in their current schools.

**Teaching, learning and leading conditions affect teacher retention and recruitment.** A key element in retaining teachers is effective leadership that provides sufficient planning and instructional time and empowers teachers in a trusting, supportive environment.

Teachers who want to remain at their schools are two to three times more likely than those wanting to move to a new school to agree that they work in a trusting, supportive environment.

Teachers report that teacher empowerment (31 percent) and school leadership (26 percent) are the most important factors in determining whether they will remain at their schools.

Better teaching conditions — such as adequate time, reduced teaching loads and additional support personnel for students — are considered important incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools. More than half identified each of these as important. While certain financial incentives were also considered important, bonuses ranked relatively low, with only 29 percent indicating that a signing bonus

‘We are urging all of our members in participating schools to review the results with their school leadership teams and figure out how to address any concerns that are raised.’

—MTA President Anne Wass

would be an “extremely effective” incentive.

**Educators report a number of concerns.** Significant numbers of teachers:

- Do not feel included in decision-making processes (about half).
- Do not feel they are trusted to make decisions about instructional issues (about a third).
- Do not feel there is sufficient time for them to be successful with all of their students (about 60 percent).
- Do not feel their schools are environmentally healthy, clean and well maintained (about half).
- Believe that poor attendance and student tardiness are significant obstacles to achievement (about two-thirds).

Please turn to **TeLLS**/Page 22

## Looking to Honor One of Our Own

### Is there an MTA member who:

Helped you as a student?

Mentored you as a beginning educator?

Fostered your involvement in MTA?

Encouraged you professionally and personally?

### Now is your time to recognize his or her contribution.

Provide the following information and mail it to:

“Looking to Honor One of Our Own”  
Jo Ann Fitzgerald  
MTA  
20 Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108



Name of Nominee\*

Address of Nominee (if known)

Local of Nominee (if known)

\* Nominee must be an active or retired member of MTA.

Name of Nominator  
( )

Phone

Address of Nominator

Local Association

In **250 words or less**, state on a separate sheet of paper why you believe this MTA member should be honored. The decision of the MTA Retired Members Committee is final.

The honoree selected by the MTA Retired Members Committee will receive a \$200 cash prize.

**ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY FRIDAY, MARCH 6**

## No Lines. No Waiting.

MTA/NEA retirees and pre-retirees can now purchase or renew memberships with a click of the mouse.

MTA/NEA retired and pre-retired memberships can be purchased or renewed at:  
[www.massteacher.org/retired](http://www.massteacher.org/retired)

Questions? Call MTA’s Membership Accounting Office at 617.878.8118.

- Faster processing times.
- Members receive ID cards in a more timely fashion.
- No checks to write or forms to fill out.
- Secure Internet connection means your credit card information is protected.



# Getting an inside look

Conference gives future teachers a chance to learn, network and strategize

By Sarah Nathan

College students from across Massachusetts gathered recently in Worcester to get an insider's look into the teaching profession.

About 100 undergraduates, most of them education majors studying at state colleges, turned out for "What Every Future Teacher Needs to Know," an annual conference organized by the MTA and affiliated student groups.

The daylong event, held on Oct. 18 at Worcester State College, gave participants the chance to learn classroom strategies, network with other prospective teachers and pick up a few "tricks of the trade" from veteran educators.

"I really love this conference — I recommend it to everybody," said Cheryl Watson, a senior education major at Worcester State who serves as president of the college's chapter of the Student Education Association of Massachusetts. "It's a great opportunity to get good practical information and meet people who are on similar tracks."

The conference, held for an eighth year, provided incoming educators with the opportunity to set aside their textbooks and focus on the more hands-on aspects of careers in the public schools.

It included sessions on classroom management, English language learners, licensure, political action, résumé writing and the legal realities of Internet technology.

"This conference really helps to fill in the gaps, and it touches on things that aren't always taught in conventional classes — like how to deal with parents," said Erinne Wortham, vice president of the SEAM chapter at Westfield State College and the new co-chair of the MTA Student Membership Committee. "I went to a session on English language learners because I'm likely going to have



Dee Penniman, top right, a member of Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association, enjoys a comment made by Fitchburg State College President Robert Antonucci, top left, during his keynote address. Later in the day, Penniman participated in a panel called "Strategies for Getting and Keeping Your First Teaching Job." At left, future teachers listen intently during a workshop on résumé writing presented by Lucille Boutiette, assistant superintendent of schools in Grafton.

Photos by Sarah Nathan

ELL students in my classroom and I don't have a lot of training in this area."

Wortham, who is currently a junior, said the event also introduces incoming teachers to the MTA.

"You definitely know what the MTA is about after spending a day at the future teachers' conference," she said. "It's really helpful for those of us who are entering the profession to learn how the MTA works and its role in the teaching community."

It is also important for future educators to understand the services the MTA provides to members — "including informing members about pro-education candidates and

important education issues at the state level," Wortham said.

Erika Clare, who is studying to be a teacher at Bridgewater State and is a member of the college's SEAM chapter, said she made the trip to Worcester because she is trying to take advantage of as many learning opportunities as possible.

"I'm here to help enhance the learning that I'm getting at Bridgewater," she said. "I've learned that it is really important to join the professional association that represents teachers. I've made the decision to be part of as much as I can be and just soak up everything."

One of the highlights of the day

was the keynote address delivered by Fitchburg State College President Robert Antonucci. Antonucci, a former classroom teacher, superintendent and state education commissioner, urged the future teachers to get involved in the debate over public education and help influence public policy.

"Without public education, we would not have the democracy that we have today," Antonucci said.

"Ignore the negative headlines about public education and keep doing good work," he advised the audience, adding: "The American public school system is one of the best in the world."

Please turn to **Future**/Page 17

Paid Advertisement

## The Three C's of Our Graduate Programs

Convenience.  
Choice.  
Cost.

Spring semester begins Jan. 14



**Framingham**  
STATE COLLEGE

Graduate and Continuing Education

Online. On Campus. Ongoing.  
framingham.edu/dgce · 508 626 4550



# Beginners connect with veterans

Conference helps new teachers overcome obstacles and succeed in the classroom

By Bob Duffy

As the capacity crowd trickled out of the luncheon at the MTA's recent Just for New Teachers conference, Eve Vidito was nervous.

In the end, she decided to ignore her jitters and approach MTA President Anne Wass to talk about remarks Wass had made at the JFNT event a year earlier in which she recounted her own struggles as a new teacher.

"You made me feel normal, and it really was a turning point for me as a teacher," Vidito told Wass.

Before entering public education, the 33-year-old educator had almost a decade of private-sector work experience and had spent two years teaching in a private school. Yet for her, as it has for many other beginning teachers, the transition proved difficult.

Helping newcomers overcome the challenges they face in the classroom is a key focus of the JFNT conference, which is put on by the MTA New Member Committee and the Center for Education Policy and Practice.

This year's event, held on Dec. 5, drew a crowd of 250 to the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel and Trade Center in Marlborough. The participants spent the day in workshops on classroom management, assessing student progress, communicating with parents, licensure and legal basics, among other topics.

But encounters such as the one between Vidito and Wass — between new teachers and veteran educators — are an important part of the experience.

"I was having a rough year, and Anne's speech really rang true for me," Vidito told *MTA Today*, adding that she had meant to send Wass a note of appreciation.

"I wanted to thank her for helping me realize that I was going through normal growing pains," she explained. "I feel a lot better this year."

Hearing the positive feedback clearly inspired the MTA president,



Photos by Bob Duffy

Above, Eve Vidito, right, a member of the Marshfield Education Association, shares a moment with MTA President Anne Wass. At left, Abigail Cordell of the Watertown Teachers Association, left, poses with Kerry Miller of the Ashburnham-Westminster Teachers Association. Both are active on the MTA New Member Committee.

---

'We try to create an environment where they are comfortable sharing, comparing and reflecting on different experiences they have had while they make connections with each other and people at the MTA who can provide them with assistance.'

—Ryan Hoyt  
Chair, MTA New Member Committee

---

who taught middle school for more than three decades.

"Getting a chance to hear that in person really made my day, and it was better than a hundred thank you notes," Wass remarked. Vidito, as it turned out, teaches in Marshfield, where Wass lives.

As the two women laughed and talked, a similar conversation was taking place a few feet away.

Michael Flynn, the 2008 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, had just delivered a keynote address that included anecdotes about how difficult

it was for him when he first entered an elementary school classroom. The speech led a first-year teacher to seek him out for a quiet moment.

"I shared with her how difficult my first year was, and I urged her to find another colleague or new teacher whom she could confide in so she does not feel isolated," Flynn said later.

The beginner apparently took comfort from the fact that even such an accomplished educator had not found things easy at the start.

Both special moments reflect a key benefit of the JFNT conference and other programs sponsored by the New Member Committee. While providing practical techniques and strategies to help new members enhance their teaching skills, the programs also help them build their professional networks.

Many new teachers are juggling their personal lives and the challenges of learning the profession, getting Professional Teacher Status and earning master's degrees. Such a trial by fire can take a huge toll; statistics show that nearly 40 percent of new public

school teachers leave the profession during their first five years.

"Many of these individuals share common concerns, frustrations, triumphs and successes," said Waltham teacher Ryan Hoyt, who chairs the committee. "It's important for them to have these discussions as they work to refine their teaching styles and skills."

"We try to create an environment where they are comfortable sharing, comparing and reflecting on different experiences they have had while they make connections with each other and people at the MTA who can provide them with assistance," Hoyt added.

It's an approach that draws praise from Vidito, who attended a workshop about English language learners this year after participating last year in sessions on classroom management and special education.

She plans to return in 2009 for the eighth edition of the JFNT event.

"The conference provides a lot of useful techniques and information, and I recommend it to all the new members I know," Vidito said. "But the truth is it's also very helpful to be able to commiserate with other new teachers."

Paid Advertisement

we put your  
mind to work.

The Graduate School  
WORCESTER STATE COLLEGE

brain power. use it or lose it.  
www.worcester.edu/graduate



# MTA 2009 Summer Conference Request for Proposals

**Proposals must be received by January 9 to be considered**  
*Submit your proposal online at [www.massteacher.org/rfps](http://www.massteacher.org/rfps)*

*MTA's 2009 Summer Conference will be at Williams College in Williamstown — Sunday through Thursday, August 2–6. Pre-conference workshops will commence on Sunday and will be limited to Emerging Leaders, New Presidents, Experienced Presidents and New Members.*

*The MTA is seeking proposals in the following general categories. Examples are not intended to limit the variety of proposals.*

## **Building Stronger Locals — Bargaining, Representation, Leadership Development and Organizing**

- *Contract Negotiations*
- *Member Representation and Contract Maintenance*
- *Leadership Development*
- *Building Stronger, Strategic, Member-Driven Locals*
- *Building Support in Our Communities*
- *Using New Technologies to Engage and Activate Members in Our Schools and Our Communities*

## **The Professional Educator: Educational Policy, Professional Development and Instructional Practice**

*Professional development workshops to improve instructional practice for teachers and paraprofessionals. Special consideration will be given to proposals that address instructional practices that integrate Web-based and Smart Board technology, lesson preparation for English language learners, strategies for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and differentiated instructional practices addressing students' readiness to learn, level of independence or performance assessment task development.*

## **Personal Growth and Lifestyle Enhancement**

- *Assertiveness Training for an Educational Environment*
- *Workplace Bullying*
- *Social Networking Technologies for the 21st Century (How to Use PDAs, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Etc.)*
- *Time or Stress Management*
- *Self Improvement (Yoga, Tai Chi, Health, Nutrition)*

## **Organizational Culture**

- *Cultural Literacy*
- *Diversity*
- *Union History*
- *Music and the Arts*
- *Humor, Authors, Innovative Presentations*
- *Performances*
- *Social Events and Recreational Activities (with Volunteers to Coordinate Them)*

*The MTA is a licensed provider of CEUs. Participants may earn PDPs for workshops that meet the DESE license-renewal requirements. Participants who are PreK–12 paraprofessionals/instructional aides/teaching assistants may earn PTPs.*

## **Other Information**

- *In February, the Summer Conference Planning Team will make selections and set the final schedule of seminars, workshops and events.*
- *The conference brochure will be sent to all MTA members in the April/May issue of MTA Today and will be posted on MTA's Web site, [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org).*
- *The workshop and housing registration deadline will be June 12.*
- *Important: Proposals for workshops and social or recreational events must be submitted by January 9.*
- *Honoraria and expenses will be subject to current presenter fee guidelines.*
- *All proposals must include all presenters' names and contact information, along with information on specific logistical needs. E-mail addresses are vital!*
- *All proposals must be submitted electronically.*
- *To access the Request for Proposals form, go to: [www.massteacher.org/rfps](http://www.massteacher.org/rfps)*

*For additional information, please contact:*

*Mary Ann Alfond  
[malfond@massteacher.org](mailto:malfond@massteacher.org) | 617.878.8213  
Sandra Caruso  
[scaruso@massteacher.org](mailto:scaruso@massteacher.org) | 617.878.8253*



# Fight to repeal offsets will continue

As the new Congress convenes, the MTA and the NEA will continue to strongly back legislation that would repeal two Social Security provisions that unfairly penalize thousands of educators in their retirement years.

The legislation was introduced as the Social Security Fairness Act in the 110th Congress and drew substantial support in both the House and the Senate.

It is expected to be reintroduced early in the 111th Congress, which will convene in January, shortly before U.S. Senator Barack Obama is inaugurated as the nation's 44th president.

The Government Pension Offset reduces the Social Security spousal or survivor benefits of educators and other public employees in certain states by an amount equal to two-thirds of their public pensions. Estimates indicate that nine out of 10 public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their deceased spouses paid Social Security taxes for many years.

The Windfall Elimination Provision affects people who have worked in jobs not covered by Social Security and in jobs in which they have earned Social Security benefits. The WEP penalizes many people who move from jobs in the private sector to the education field, where they often do not earn credit toward Social Security.

Individually and in combination, the GPO and the WEP heavily penalize teachers, higher education faculty and staff and other education professionals in Massachusetts and 14 other states in which public employees are not part of the Social Security system. The two provisions have an impact on the recruitment and retention of teachers at a time when both are crucial for public education.

The MTA and the NEA have long been active supporters of the Social Security Fairness Act, which would eliminate both the GPO and the WEP.

In the House, the legislation has been H.R. 82; in the Senate, it has been S. 206.

As the 110th Congress drew near to its conclusion, H.R. 82 had 352 co-sponsors, while S. 206 had 38 co-sponsors. The list included all Massachusetts members of the House and Senate.

"We must continue to fight for the repeal of these offsets," said Margaret "Peggy" Kane, a retired Medford teacher who testified about the repeal

legislation in 2007 before a Senate subcommittee.

"The number of people who are hurt by the GPO and the WEP continues to grow each year," added Kane, a member of the MTA Retired Members Committee. "MTA must continue to work with NEA and other state associations to ensure that our members receive the Social Security benefits they have earned."

As the effort moves forward, members are urged to join the MTA's

Social Security e-lert system to keep informed about the progress of the legislation.

To join the MTA Social Security e-lert system and receive regular updates on the effort to repeal the GPO and the WEP, please send your name, complete address, MTA ID number, current or former local association affiliation and home e-mail address to Jo Ann Fitzgerald, MTA retired members service specialist, at [jffitzgerald@massteacher.org](mailto:jffitzgerald@massteacher.org).

## Barack Obama to NEA: 'Nobody should be penalized for serving our children'

The following are excerpts from an October 22 letter directed to NEA members from Senator Barack Obama:

*"Nobody should be penalized for serving our children, and that's why I support repealing the GPO/WEP and will work to do so as President ... [T]he Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset have a serious detrimental impact on hundreds of thousands of educators and your spouses. That's why as a Senator I co-sponsored the Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal these provisions. ..."*

*"I believe that we have a responsibility to take care of workers who have devoted their lives to public service and that we shouldn't discourage young people from working in these essential jobs at a time when so many teachers are at or near retirement age and we're struggling to replace them. ..."*

*"I will work to repeal GPO and WEP, but I won't stop there. We need to think now about how we provide retirement security for today's retirees and workers retiring 20 or 30 or more years down the road. Let me tell you about my comprehensive plan. It starts with protecting Social Security. It is one of the most successful social programs in American history, and we need to preserve and maintain it, without risky privatization plans. ... Improving retirement security for educators ... will be a high priority for me as President. ..."*

*"I greatly appreciate the support I have from the NEA, and I look forward to working with you as President to create the changes we all want to see in our country."*

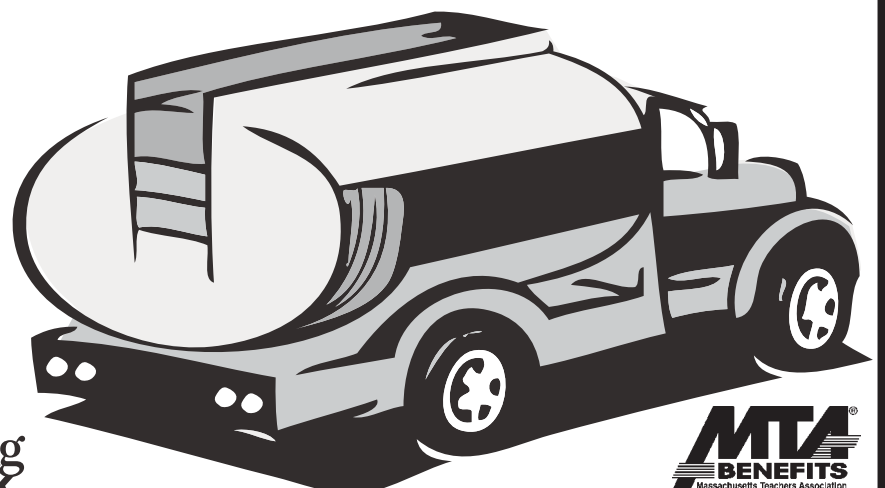
## Get a Better Deal on Home Heating Oil!

With the arrival of winter there is no better time to sign up for the MTA Oil Buying Network and enjoy significant savings and other exclusive advantages including:

- Average savings of 10-25 cents a gallon
- A special MTA membership cost of only \$15
- Deliveries and service from top-rated local heating oil suppliers
- Automatic delivery, budget billing and 24-hour burner service

Find out how much you can save!  
**1-800-649-7473**

 Oil Buying  
Network



  
Endorsed Program



# ••• REGIONAL RETIREMENT CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE •••

The MTA conducts retirement consultations throughout the state to assist members. Proof of membership must be submitted when requesting retirement services. This schedule is in effect from September to June. In the event of inclement weather, it is advisable to call consultants in advance.

**ASHBURNHAM** — Robert Zbikowski: second Thursday of each month (**walk in**), 4 to 8 p.m., Overlook Middle School library, front entrance, 10 Oakmont Dr., Ashburnham; 978.827.1425, or at home, 978.297.0123; e-mail: [zibstar702@verizon.net](mailto:zibstar702@verizon.net).

**AUBURN** — Louise Gaskins: first and second Saturdays of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Central Office, 48 Sword St., Auburn; 508.791.2121, or at home, 978.448.5351.

**BOSTON** — Harold Crowley: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (**by appointment only**), 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., MTA, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston; 617.742.7950, ext. 8240, or 800.392.6175, ext. 8240.

**BRAINTREE** — Mary Hanna: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Metropolitan Office, 100 Grandview Road, Braintree; 781.380.1410, or at home, 781.545.2069.

**CAPE COD** — Consultant: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Barnstable Teachers Association (BTA), 100 West Main St., Suite #7, Hyannis; 508.775.8625.

**HOLYOKE** — Dennis O'Connor: third Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Western Office, 55 Bobala Road, Suite 3, Holyoke; 413.535.2415, or at home, 413.737.7509.

**LYNNFIELD** — Mary Parry: third and fourth Saturdays of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Northeast Office, 50 Salem St., Bldg. B, Lynnfield; 781.246.9779, or at home, 978.372.2031; fax, 978.372.2035.

**NORTHAMPTON** — Dennis O'Connor: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 38 Gothic St., Northampton; 413.584.8313, or at home, 413.737.7509.

**PITTSFIELD** — Ward F. Johnson: second Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Berkshire Office, 740 Williams St., Williams St. Plaza, Pittsfield; 413.499.0257, or at home, 413.443.1722; e-mail: [wardman33@aol.com](mailto:wardman33@aol.com).

**RAYNHAM** — Sandra Stephenson: third Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 90 New State Highway (Rte. 44), Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 508.747.2234; e-mail: [rockowl@aol.com](mailto:rockowl@aol.com). Edward Nelson: fourth Saturday of each month (**walk in**), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., MTA Southeast Office, 90 New State Highway (Rte. 44), Raynham; 508.822.5371, or at home, 508.853.5769.

**HIGHER ED AT-LARGE** — Edward McCourt, Massachusetts Bay Community College, Wellesley; 781.239.2207; e-mail: [emccourt.mccc@gmail.com](mailto:emccourt.mccc@gmail.com).

*Note: If you or your association would like to have a retirement workshop at your school, your local president should call Harold Crowley at 800.392.6175, ext. 8240. Please be aware that the MTA does not have a record of your service, so members are advised to bring that information along to meetings.*

## Sean and Basia Powers bought a foreclosed home – the smart way



### Thinking about saving with a foreclosure?

Savvy first-time homebuyers Sean and Basia Powers offer these tips to MTA members:

**Work with the experts.**

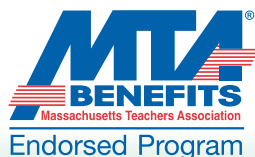
Use an attorney who specializes in foreclosures. Contact MTAB for guidance on homeowners insurance to protect your new investment.

**Consider an FHA loan.**

It offers a low down payment and the opportunity to borrow extra money for home repairs and improvements.

**Talk to Greenpark Mortgage.**

Like Sean Powers, Norwood Teachers Association, you can save an average of \$850 on closing costs and enjoy exclusive "raving fan" service.



**Be a smart buyer.  
Call 866.475.HOME today.**



MA Lender/MA Broker MC#1883



# Two teachers win prestigious awards

By Laura Barrett

Two MTA members have been chosen to receive prestigious awards for their dedication to teaching and their ability to inspire students.

David B. Mitchell, a high school teacher at Masconomet Regional High School in Topsfield, was given the 2008 national Preserve America History Teacher of the Year Award on Oct. 24 during a ceremony at the Union League Club in New York City. The award was presented by First Lady Laura Bush, honorary chair of the Preserve America initiative.

Mitchell had been named the Massachusetts Preserve America History Teacher of the Year in June. The national award winner is selected from among the state winners.

"Dave's always searching for new chances to teach and to learn. For him, sharing the love of history is a calling. And Dave's enthusiastic teaching is putting his students on the path to success," Mrs. Bush said.

Mitchell's philosophy of teaching history through the use of authentic original sources states: "These documents, photos, cartoons, and letters are still living, and this life ... helps our students feel the pulse of history."

David B. Mitchell, a high school teacher at Masconomet Regional High School in Topsfield, was given the 2008 national Preserve America History Teacher of the Year Award at a ceremony in New York City. The other honor went to Northborough teacher Chris Sardella, who received an unexpected \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award at an all-school assembly.

Mitchell began his teaching career as part of the Teach for America Program. He taught in Los Angeles and Baltimore before coming to Masconomet in 1995 with an undergraduate degree. Since then he has earned two master's degrees while working to improve opportunities for students and mentoring colleagues.

This is the fifth year that the administration's Preserve America initiative and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History have partnered to present the Preserve America History Teacher of the Year award. Each state winner receives \$1,000 and an archive of books and educational resources for his or her school's library.

The other honor went to Northborough teacher Chris Sardella, who received an unexpected \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award at an all-school assembly on Oct. 28.

Sardella is a fifth-grade teacher at the Marion E. Zeh Elementary School. He joins nearly 2,300 other national educators who have previously received the award and is one of 80 to get it in 2008.

"Chris exemplifies a dedication to his craft and a drive to see all students achieve at high levels that is at the heart of this prestigious award," Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester said in a press statement. "In Massachusetts we have many educators like Chris who demonstrate the hard work and determination necessary to make a difference in the lives of each of their students. I applaud Chris and congratulate him on this well-deserved honor."

The Milken awards were established in 1985 by the Milken Family Foundation. Each recipient receives a check for \$25,000, a trip to Los Angeles for a conference and award

ceremony and membership in the network of previous Milken winners. This is the 12th year Massachusetts has participated in the program. Sardella is the 36th teacher in Massachusetts to receive the recognition.

In nominating him for the award, Sardella's colleagues described him as being considerate of both his fellow teachers and the needs and abilities of his students. He is known for using innovative strategies to engage his students, setting high standards for his classroom and providing students with the additional support they need to succeed.

"Chris is an excellent role model as a teacher and as a colleague," said fellow teacher Jennifer Phipps. "His students reach higher goals than they themselves think are possible. His dedication to his students and his work are truly an inspiration to me."

Massachusetts recipients are selected by an independent statewide panel of principals, teachers and other educators. Criteria for the award include exceptional educational talent and promise, skill in developing innovative and creative curricula and programs, commitment to professional development and ability to instill self-confidence in students.

Paid Advertisement

## The Verdict... Guilty!

The Salem Witch Hysteria of 1692 is an American tragedy. One by one, nineteen innocent victims were marched to Gallows Hill to be hanged. Few dared to speak up for fear they would be next!

Witness this historically accurate dramatization of the witch trials, experience the suffering of the accused and... You be the Judge!

Don't miss Salem's most visited museum and our new exhibit

Witches: Evolving Perceptions.



Salem  
Witch  
Museum

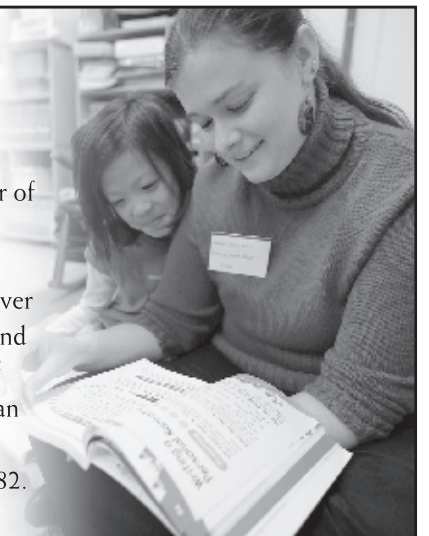
Washington Square, Salem, Massachusetts 01970 (978) 744-1692  
salemwitchmuseum.com

All presentations translated in French, German, Japanese, Spanish & Italian.

Paid Advertisement

## EXCEL IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Fitchburg State College, the #1 educator of Central Massachusetts teachers, offers quality, affordable education with small class sizes and dedicated faculty. With over 35 graduate and undergraduate degree and certificate programs and a wide range of professional development options, we can meet your needs. For more information, visit [www.fsc.edu/mta](http://www.fsc.edu/mta) or call (978) 665-3182.



**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**March 9, 2009**  
**Rick Lavoie, M.A., M.Ed.**

**Internationally Acclaimed Expert on Learning Disabilities and Fitchburg State College Alumnus**

Rick Lavoie will be coming to Fitchburg State College for a full-day workshop. The workshop begins with an exploration of some of the common misconceptions related to student motivation and some of the common strategies that are ineffective (competition, reward systems, punishment). Specific approaches and strategies will then be presented that will enable teachers and parents to motivate students ... and maintain that motivation throughout the school year.

For more information, visit [www.fsc.edu/gce/speaker](http://www.fsc.edu/gce/speaker).

Sponsored by the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education and the Center for Professional Studies

FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE  
Graduate and Continuing Education



# ESPs gather to hone bargaining skills

By Bob Duffy

Education support professionals from around the state got together on a recent weekend to hone their bargaining skills and hear encouraging words about why they should be active in their local associations.

They talked about best practices, attended workshops and discussed their work situations and their experiences.

It was all part of a Statewide Bargaining Summit designed by the MTA's ESP Committee that was held at the Natick Crowne Plaza on Oct. 25.

ESP Committee Chair Donna Johnson said the summit, the second of its kind, was designed to "help our ESP colleagues grow their leadership and professional development skills."

Last year, the committee obtained an organizing grant from the NEA to fund a series of training sessions. In addition to offering the bargaining summits, the committee has sponsored training sessions about the campaign to defeat Question 1, the Income Tax Repeal Initiative.

Johnson, who is a member of the MTA Executive Committee and president of the University Staff Association at UMass Amherst, said the program exceeded expectations in all respects.



Malden Education Association ESPs Paula Higgins, Tina Buonomo and Ruth Yarasitis, left to right in back, are joined by Lorraine Niccoli of the Brockton Paraprofessional Association, in foreground wearing large button, during an advanced workshop at the recent bargaining summit.

"It was a huge success! These trainings have surpassed the goals we set," she said.

"Not only are we offering trainings," she continued, "but we are helping those interested in getting involved in their locals by giving them the confidence they need to step up."

The bargaining summit offered both introductory classes for newcomers and advanced classes for members who attended last year's summit and wanted additional training. MTA Consultants Jason Mathes, Steve Davis, Ann Sullivan and Paul Ryan

presented the sessions, with assistance from Joy Beckwith and Lois Mason.

The initial-level classes covered the basics of collective bargaining. They introduced participants to common bargaining terms, outlined the differences between traditional and interest-based bargaining, explained the distinction between just cause and good cause and focused on sample grievance arbitration and contract language.

Intermediate training offered second-time summit participants the chance to improve their negotiating

ESP Committee Chair Donna Johnson said the summit, the second of its kind, was designed to 'help our ESP colleagues grow their leadership and professional development skills.'

skills, discuss their circumstances and develop arguments related to the actual issues they were facing.

"I would certainly recommend this training to any colleague who is interested in being on a bargaining team," said paraprofessional Mildred Ficarra, who just finished a stint on the Weymouth Teachers Association's bargaining team.

"I would also like to see other colleagues attend these workshops to gain insight and an understanding of what goes on before, during and after a bargaining session," she added.

Ficarra, who is the at-large director representing ESPs on the MTA Board, noted that although the WTA has a tentative agreement, the local will begin bargaining again this spring. She said she is eager to apply the skills she has developed.

"I have attended many workshops sponsored by the MTA ESP Committee, and they all have been extremely helpful," Ficarra said. "I have always learned something new."

Paid Advertisement

## Hard times hit public colleges

Continued from Page 5

student fees and tuition is out there," said Joseph LeBlanc, president of the Massachusetts Community College Council.

"While we are planning to organize and work hard to avoid additional cuts, it may not be possible if things get worse — and things are expected to get worse.

"When economic times are bad, we need to make public higher education more accessible and affordable for people," he added. "It is unconscionable to cut faculty and professional staff who are on the front lines teaching our students."

Meanwhile, the unions will likely have to fight another attempt by the governor to increase the amount that state employees, including those working in public higher education, pay for health insurance.

Patrick proposed the legislation in October as part of his mid-year package of budget reductions. While legislators did not take up the proposal, which would introduce a three-tier system for paying health insurance premiums and require most MTA higher ed members to take a cut in pay, it is expected to resurface in the new legislative session.



## School of Graduate Studies

### A Higher Degree of Excellence.

## Educating for the future

### SINCE 1840

One of the oldest institutions of higher education for teacher preparation in the United States



**Bridgewater State College offers postbaccalaureate programs leading to initial licensure in:**

- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Leadership
- Elementary Education
- Health
- Physical Education
- Secondary Education
- Accelerated Postbaccalaureate Program for Initial Licensure grades 5-12

**Graduate programs leading to Master's Degree in Education (MEd) include**

- Counseling
- Educational Leadership
- Health Promotion
- Reading
- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education
- Instructional Technology
- Special Education

**Other master's degrees for educators**

- Master of Arts in Teaching
- Master of Science in Physical Education

**Post-master's degree programs**

- Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership in Mental Health Counseling, Reading and School Guidance Counseling
- A collaborative CAGS/EdD program in Educational Leadership and Reading with the University of Massachusetts Lowell

**For more information, contact the School of Graduate Studies.**

**PHONE: 508.531.1300 • WEB SITE: [www.bridgew.edu/SoGs](http://www.bridgew.edu/SoGs) • E-MAIL: [gradschool@bridgew.edu](mailto:gradschool@bridgew.edu)**



## Future teachers gather to learn and network

Continued from Page 10

While serving as education commissioner, Antonucci played a key role in the enactment of the state's Education Reform Act of 1993, which, among other things, brought about the MCAS tests. He said that there is still work to be done and that the current system of standards — which includes teacher testing, MCAS and curriculum frameworks — needs improvement.

"We are losing a lot of people who want to be teachers because we are putting up too many barriers," he said. "We need a balanced approach to the work we do."

"MCAS is a good standard, but we need more than one standard," he continued.

The conference was organized by the state chapters of SEAM, the MTA Student Membership Committee and the MTA Center for Education Policy and Practice. There are currently five SEAM chapters in Massachusetts. They are at Bridgewater State, Fitchburg State, Framingham State, Westfield State and Worcester State.

Martha Scheffer, who serves as faculty adviser to the SEAM chapter at Worcester State and is also a member of the Association of Professional Administrators, had nothing but praise for the conference.

"I think it is an invaluable experience for pre-service teachers — not only from a learning standpoint, but also as an introduction to the professionalism of the field and the association that will represent these students," she said.

## ESP Award nominations to be sought

Day after day, education support professionals throughout the Commonwealth play unique and significant roles in their schools, on their campuses and in their communities. But sometimes their special contributions don't get the recognition they deserve.

Soon, MTA ESPs will have a chance to address that problem.

In January, all MTA ESPs will be receiving nomination forms for the 2009 MTA ESP Award. They will have just over a month — until Feb. 13 — to get the forms and accompanying documentation completed, approved by local association leaders and postmarked for submission to MTA ESP Organizer/Consultant Nancy Robbie.

"We can't wait to see the nominations for this year," said Donna Johnson, who serves as chair of the MTA ESP Committee, president of the University Staff Association at UMass Amherst and a member of the MTA Executive Committee. "When the submissions are rolling in, it's a real pleasure to open the mail and learn about the great things our members are doing to help students and make a difference in their towns and cities."

"There are huge numbers of wonderful ESPs out there — and too often they are among the unsung heroes of public education," Johnson added. "Now it's up to their colleagues to put their names forward."

Once the required information has been gathered, the nomination forms must be signed by local presidents or authorized by a local's executive committee or board of directors. After the forms are

The award will be presented at the MTA ESP Conference, which will be held May 8 and 9 in Hyannis. Only ESPs are eligible for the award, and there can be only one ESP nominee from any local.

received, they are reviewed by the ESP Committee, which sends a nominee's name along to the MTA Board. The award will be presented at the MTA ESP Conference, which will be held May 8 and 9 in Hyannis.

Only ESPs are eligible for the award, and there can be only one ESP nominee from any local.

The nomination form calls for supporting material in five areas:

- Professional practice.
- Advocacy and association involvement.
- Community engagement.
- Enhancement of the image of ESPs.
- Personal achievement.

Details are provided on the nomination forms, which will be sent to ESP members' home addresses.

The 2008 ESP Award winner was Cheryl Miller-Harper, an instructional paraprofessional at Gateway Regional Middle School in Huntington. Miller-Harper, an active and dedicated member of the Gateway Teachers Association, was honored for her work with special needs children.

For further information, please e-mail Robbie at [nrobbie@massteacher.org](mailto:nrobbie@massteacher.org) or call her at 800.542.5504.



Paid Advertisement

Paid Advertisement

## Life 101

PAID INTERNSHIPS  
at the Peabody Essex Museum



The Goddess Vasurimala, mid-19th century, India.

Paid internships for high school and college students are available at the Peabody Essex Museum, one of the nation's leading art museums.

Call 978-745-9500, ext. 3217, or visit [pem.org/intern](http://pem.org/intern) for more information.

Support provided by ECHO (Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations)

**P | E | M** Peabody  
Essex  
Museum

East India Square | Salem, MA 01970

## Invest in a Lesley degree and double your career benefits!

Lesley helps teachers maximize their education investment with Master's programs that can deliver a second, separate license.

If you have an initial license in Early Childhood or Elementary Education, Lesley's Special Education or Reading Specialist program will satisfy the professional licensure requirements while also leading to a second license.



Scott Perrin '03  
M.Ed. with Initial Licensure  
in Special Education

Financial aid and scholarships available. For details:  
617.349.8300 | [info@lesley.edu](mailto:info@lesley.edu) | [lesley.edu/info/grow](http://lesley.edu/info/grow)

**LESLEY UNIVERSITY** Let's wake up the world<sup>SM</sup>

School of Education

GA08\_SOE\_PA030



# Are you saving enough on insurance?

Have you taken advantage of deeper discounts with the MTA Group Auto Program? In 2008, the Massachusetts insurance commissioner's "managed competition" ruling resulted in lower auto insurance rates. Now's the time to check with MTA Benefits — whether or not you currently insure your car through MTAB — so our trained insurance professionals can review your policy to find ways to help you save more.

Here are some examples of savings available through MTA Group Auto/Home and our carrier, The Hanover Insurance Company:

- **A 10 percent MTA group discount** — far more than most other insurers offer.

- **Up to an additional 15 percent discount** on Part A of your home insurance if you insure both your home and auto with The Hanover.

- **Up to a 21 percent discount** on your auto insurance if you insure both your home and multiple automobiles through MTAB.

- **Reduced rates** for "best" drivers.

- **Added discounts** for such factors as driving less than 7,500 miles a year, driving safely and completing an advanced driver training program.

- **Reduction of the collision deductible by \$100 per year** for each year without a chargeable accident (with a maximum applicable reduction of \$500 at any one time and a minimum deductible of \$100).

Find out how much you can save! Call 888.908.MTAB (6822) to speak to an insurance professional. Expanded service hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Underwritten by Hanover Insurance Company and Citizens Insurance Company of America, companies of The Hanover Insurance Group ([www.hanover.com](http://www.hanover.com)). Product availability and services may vary by state, but our commitment to MTA members does not. Member discount is available to Massachusetts residents only.*

## Another fan of MTA auto insurance



MTA member John Storella-Mullin and MTAB Account Representative Nancy Carey

*'Nancy Carey provided me with great service when I insured my automobile through MTA Benefits. She enlightened me on the options for insuring our cars while my son, John, was away at college. I greatly appreciate her dedication, timely response and quick turnaround in sending the application to me. It made the process very easy and enabled me to save quite a bit of money — sooner rather than later.'*

— John Storella-Mullin, Hanover Teachers Association

## Winter challenges even the best drivers

One thing most people agree on: New England winter driving is tough and needs to be relearned every year. The obvious first step is to remove snow and ice from your car before starting out to improve visibility. The next is to review critical winter driving skills.

**Starting and stopping:** Anti-lock brakes help maintain control in a panic stop, but require steady pressure rather than the pumping action required by standard brakes.

With significantly longer stopping distances on slick surfaces, you may need to double the recommended dry surface rule of one car length of distance for each 10 miles per hour of speed.

You should also travel at a lower speed to better manage longer stopping times and possible sideways skidding in a panic stop.

All-wheel drive only helps you get started — it doesn't help you stop more quickly. In fact, vehicles such as SUVs that have all-wheel drive often weigh more than cars; their momentum may carry them farther in a panic stop.

**Avoiding skids:** Skids are typically controlled by gently steering in the direction of the skid, gentle braking and shifting into neutral.

Approach intersections with extra caution as water vapor from stopped cars may have frozen on the road.

**Getting out of trouble:** Keep a winter kit in the trunk: scraper, compact broom, bag of granola or energy bars, flashlight with spare batteries,



cat litter (or a traction mat or bag of sand), blanket, extra gloves, flares or emergency reflectors, booster cables and small shovel.

If you're stuck in snow or ice, you can gain traction by first turning the wheels each way without applying any gas. Gently apply a small amount of gas to ease forward or rock lightly back and forth. If that doesn't work or the wheels spin, apply sand, kitty litter or a traction mat under the stuck wheels.

Cars produce carbon monoxide. If a car is lodged in snow that blocks the exhaust pipe, those inside could be poisoned. Be sure to clear the area around the exhaust and run the engine 10 to 15 minutes per hour. If possible, crack open a window just enough to admit fresh air.

**Courses that could mean policy discounts:** The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles offers courses to help you learn winter driving techniques. For information, visit [www.mass.gov/rmv/driversed/selectschool.htm](http://www.mass.gov/rmv/driversed/selectschool.htm).

A standard advanced driving course may include winter driving techniques and could offer up to a 10 percent discount on most coverages of your auto policy. A two- to three-hour specialized course typically supplements an advanced driver training course.

**Winter auto insurance issues:** Aggressive driving is dangerous in any season, but winter conditions vastly amplify the consequences of poor driving. Speeding, following too closely, failing to signal and all other bad road

behaviors can easily lead to an at-fault accident on winter roads. Aggressive driving is dangerous in any season, but winter conditions vastly amplify the consequences of poor driving. Speeding, following too closely, failing to signal and all other bad road behaviors can easily lead to an at-fault accident on winter roads.

behaviors can easily lead to an at-fault accident on winter roads.

In addition to the obvious consequences of accidents, your auto insurance will likely take a hit if you're responsible for an at-fault accident.

No matter how accidents occur, their cost continues to increase. You may want to add coverages and increase limits on bodily injury and personal property damage. For additional protection, an umbrella policy could affordably boost coverage and may protect your home and future earnings should you be sued after a serious accident.

Contact MTA Benefits at 888.908.MTAB (6822) to learn more about your auto insurance options — whether you are insured with us or not.



# MTA to monitor key education proposals

Continued from Page 7

Mathematics and Science Initiative will provide \$13.2 million over six years. Funding comes from ExxonMobil, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other foundations at the national and state levels.

Wass and Toner sent a memo to local presidents about the initiative in November, noting: "There are many positive aspects to this program, such as the financial resources made available to your school and district to increase the professional development

for teachers and the number of AP course offerings available to your students."

They also warned, however, that grant recipients are required to institute a "pay for performance" plan under which individual teachers in participating schools would receive bonuses for every student scoring 3, 4 or 5 — considered passing grades — on an AP test. Students are also given money for passing the exam.

"As you know, the MTA and NEA oppose differentiated pay for different

*Tough Choices* calls for many changes in public education. Program participants are not required to sign on to the entire report, but instead to pick several priorities from among the options.

subject areas and we oppose paying teachers on the basis of student test scores," they wrote. "It is MTA's position that all aspects of the program are subject to collective bargaining, and if you hear that your district has applied for or has received one of these grants, you should immediately contact your MTA consultant and superintendent and file a demand to bargain over the implementation of this program."

## 'Tough Choices' proposals

The Commonwealth has embarked on yet another initiative, joining Utah and New Hampshire in agreeing to pursue some of the proposals outlined in a 2007 report, *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, produced by the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce.

*Tough Choices* calls for many changes in public education. Program participants are not required to sign on to the entire report, but instead to pick several priorities from among the options.

Should federal funding be allocated to this project, Massachusetts is seeking funds for several priorities, including expanding early childhood education and developing the Readiness Schools. The Massachusetts proposal also calls for exploring the

possibility of developing a statewide teachers' contract, though details about what that would look like have not been released.

New Hampshire, by contrast, is proposing to adopt the report's controversial plan to end high school for many students at age 16. Under this approach, students who passed a battery of tests but did not excel would be admitted to community colleges or vocational training programs, while those who excelled would take a rigorous course of studies in their final two years, preparing them for selective colleges.

## Funding and benefits

Recognizing that improvements can take longer to pass during an economic slump, the MTA is nonetheless focused on several economic goals. These include studying — and ultimately improving — the Chapter 70 school funding formula, winning more equitable cost-of-living adjustments for retirees, preserving the right of local associations to bargain over health care benefits and, on the national level, reforming the Social Security system by abolishing the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, which adversely affect MTA members and thousands of other public employees.

## Recommended candidates are victorious

Continued from Page 7

Middlesex; Danielle Gregoire, 4th Middlesex; Kate Hogan, 3rd Middlesex; Kevin Honan, 17th Suffolk; Paul Kujawski, 8th Worcester; Jason Lewis, 31st Middlesex; Barbara L'Italien, 18th Essex; Tim Madden, Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket; Matt Patrick, 3rd Barnstable; Sarah Peake, 4th Barnstable; Bob Rice, 2nd Worcester; and Rosemary Sandlin, 3rd Hampden.

The only MTA-recommended candidate who lost on Election Day was Claire Freda (U-Leominster), who was defeated by Dennis Rosa (D-Leominster) in the 4th Worcester District.

The MTA has a formal process for interviewing and evaluating candidates through its Candidate Recommendation Committee. The CRC consists of two MTA members elected from each of the state's 10 congressional districts, as well as MTA's president, vice president and executive director-treasurer.

In a race for an open seat, candidates from all parties are invited to participate in the MTA's interview process. All candidates receive the association's questionnaire and are invited to be interviewed by a team of

MTA members who represent the locals in the affected legislative districts. The candidate evaluation teams then make recommendations to the CRC for final approval.

When incumbent legislators are involved, the CRC reviews voting records to determine whether candidates have earned the MTA's recommendation.

In addition to Wass, Vice President Paul Toner and Executive Director-Treasurer David A. Borer, CRC members are Caroline Bresnahan, Adams; Maureen Carlos, Worcester; Erik J. Champy, Triton Regional; Philip Chassler, FSU Boston; Carol A. Donovan, Retired; Leo Dunn, Greater Lowell Tech; Burton Freedman, Springfield; Kenneth R. Haar, MSCA Westfield; Sheila M. Hanley, Randolph; James Kaplan, Somerville; Therese O'Donnell, GRACE-UMass Lowell; Ann O'Halloran, Newton; Joseph Rebello, Retired; Duncan Ross, Retired; Richard T. Shea, Retired; Timothy D. Sullivan, Brockton; Margaret L. Tudryn, Retired; and Donald R. Williams, MCCC North Shore. The CRC chair is Kerry A. Costello, Andover. The vice chair is Robert L. Brousseau, Retired.

Paid Advertisement

**Become A Leader In Your Profession And Community Through Our**

# GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**Master of Education**

- Bilingual Education ★
- Early Childhood ★ ☆
- Educational Leadership ★
- Elementary Education ★ ☆
- Higher Education: Student Affairs
- Library Media Studies ★
- Middle School Education: Humanities and Math/Science ★
- Physical Education
- Reading ★
- School Counseling ★
- School Business Officer ★
- Secondary Education
- Special Education ★ ☆
- Technology in Education ★

**Master of Arts in Teaching**

- Art ★ ☆
- Biology ★
- Chemistry ★
- English ★
- English as a Second Language ★
- History ★
- MA/MAT English ★
- Middle School General Science ★
- Middle School Mathematics ★
- Mathematics ★
- Spanish ★

**Non-Degree Programs**

- Fast-track Math ★
- Fast-track Science ★
- Certificate in School Adjustment Counseling ★

**C.A.G.S.**

★ - Indicates Initial Licensure  
☆ - Indicates Professional Licensure

Licensure varies by program.  
Please contact the Graduate School for further clarification.

**FAST-TRACK MATH & FAST-TRACK SCIENCE PROGRAMS**

If you're a teacher with an undergraduate degree in math or science but lack an initial license and background in pedagogy, our fast-track programs can benefit you.

**Fast-Track Math**  
Contact Julie Belock at [jbelock@salemstate.edu](mailto:jbelock@salemstate.edu)

**Fast-Track Science**  
Contact Michelle Caulfield at [mcaulfield@salemstate.edu](mailto:mcaulfield@salemstate.edu)

**Salem STATE COLLEGE**  
Educating you for life

For a complete list of graduate programs, visit [salemstate.edu/graduate](http://salemstate.edu/graduate).



## Election year a fine time for teaching

Continued from Page 8

would interfere with sports. Perhaps not surprisingly, members of the panel voted 4-1 to accept a proposal to make the penalties for tardiness more lenient and 5-0 to allow students to consume food and beverages up to first period.

The students took one proposal quite seriously: making the school more handicapped-accessible. Melissa Skello, a student on the committee that took up the issue, said she had suffered a soccer injury the previous year that put her in a wheelchair for three to four months and on crutches for another two months.

She said that the wheelchair ramps were too steep and the playing fields were virtually inaccessible, making it difficult for her to be a spectator at games.

Her committee voted unanimously to ask the school administration to improve the accessibility of the building.

Some students have taken their activism beyond the classroom and have joined Students Taking Action Now in Darfur, an after-school club that Dickson coordinates. There are 25 to 30 students in the group.

Earlier this year, Dickson chaperoned some of the organization's members on a visit to a STAND conference in Washington, D.C., where they joined more than 700 students from around the country to learn more about genocide in Darfur and other regions.

Among other activities, the STAND students held a fast in December during which they and others pledged to give up some luxury food items, such as dessert or coffee, and donated the savings to the organization. The proceeds are being used to protect women in refugee camps as they collect wood for cooking.

"This generation is different from kids when I started teaching," said Dickson, who has been at Harwich High for 12 years and has been a teacher for 15 years. "There were always some kids who were involved, but I think this generation is more committed to things outside themselves. They are really great to work with."

His students reciprocate the compliment, agreeing that John Dickson's government class is one of their favorites. No doubt they will remember their class — and their teacher — for years to come, especially during election season.

# MTA teams up with Bruins, Celtics

Continued from Page 28

teachers and students with curriculum materials that incorporate hockey into lesson plans that fall within Massachusetts framework guidelines. A number of new subject areas are covered this year, including geography, the environment and health and fitness.

The MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program is open to public school students in kindergarten through grade 12 with a B average or perfect attendance. Some students can also be singled out for recognition by school principals.

The MTA Red Sox Reading Game will be back for another season in 2009.

Star Celtics point guard Rajon Rondo will once again act as the spokesperson for the program, which has entered its third season.

At the conclusion of the Bruins and Celtics seasons next spring, the MTA will select several educators at random to receive autographed team memorabilia.

Then it will be time for the new season of the MTA Red Sox Reading

Game and the MTA Red Sox Most Valuable Educator Program.

For information on the Bruins' I.C.E. School programs, contact Liz Serpico, the team's community relations coordinator, by e-mailing [lserpico@bostonbruins.com](mailto:lserpico@bostonbruins.com) or calling 617.624.1923. For additional information on the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program, please call Jillian Paine at 617.854.8064 or e-mail [honorroll@celtics.com](mailto:honorroll@celtics.com). Information on all Reading Matters programs is available at [www.readingmatters.org](http://www.readingmatters.org).

## Your Auto Insurance Shopping List



MTA members, like other state residents, now have more choices in auto insurance. And there has never been a better time to rely on MTA's trusted insurance advice and service — always delivered at a great price!

With the leveraged buying power of more than 107,000 members, MTA Benefits offers outstanding value in auto insurance. Combining special member savings and discounts for homeowners, members (and their family members) continue to save big.

Plus, members enjoy exceptional MTAB service.

When you add it all up — great prices, special discounts and fabulous service — **MTAB remains your first choice for car insurance and benefits.**

Massachusetts  
MTA members

receiving a no-obligation auto or homeowners quote through MTAB will receive a \$5 Borders® gift card and become eligible to win a \$300 gas card.\*

**Great News! Extended Service Hours.**  
We're now here from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday to answer your questions and serve your needs.

Underwritten by Citizens Insurance Company of America, a company of The Hanover Insurance Group ([www.hanover.com](http://www.hanover.com)). Product availability and services may vary by state, but our commitment to MTA members does not. Member discount is available to Massachusetts residents only.

\* No purchase necessary, but you must be a Massachusetts resident and MTA member to receive the Borders gift card or enter the gas card giveaway when you request a quote for auto or home insurance. Borders is not a sponsor of this promotion. Borders is a registered trademark of Borders, Inc.

MTA Benefits, Inc.  
20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108-2795  
888.908.6822 | [www.MTAbenefits.com](http://www.MTAbenefits.com)



LC 08-135



# Higher ed appointees have ties to UMass

By Sarah Nathan

There are some new faces at the helm of the state's public higher education system — all with strong connections to the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts.

Dr. Charles Desmond is the new chairman of the state Board of Higher Education. He replaces Frederick W. Clark, who resigned in November for professional reasons.

Over the course of 30 years, Desmond held many positions at UMass Boston, including associate chancellor of school/community collaboration and vice chancellor for student affairs. A Fulbright scholar, he currently serves as executive vice president of the Treffler Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to improving educational opportunities and helping young people in Boston succeed.

Desmond was appointed to the BHE by Governor Deval Patrick in September and was named chairman on Dec. 4.

Dr. Nancy Hoffman was appointed by Patrick to fill the seat vacated by Desmond. Hoffman is the vice president at



Photo by Sarah Nathan

New Board of Higher Education Chairman Charles Desmond, left, poses with his predecessor, Frederick W. Clark.

Jobs for the Future, where she guides the organization's Youth Cluster activities, the Early College High School Initiative, dual-enrollment policies and practices and efforts to make college opportunities affordable. She is a founder and former faculty member of the College of Public and Community Service at UMass Boston, where she also ran the Center for the Improvement of Teaching. Hoffman was appointed on Dec. 4.

Meanwhile, Dr. Richard Freeland will likely be the state's new commissioner of higher education. Freeland served as president of Northeastern University from 1996 to 2006. From 1970 to 1992, he worked at UMass Boston, serving as assistant to the chancellor, director of education planning, founding dean of the College of Professional Studies and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

On Dec. 5, the BHE voted unanimously to recommend that Freeland be named the next commissioner of public higher education. As *MTA Today* went to press, Freeland's appointment had not yet been formally approved by state Education Secretary Paul Reville.

## International results highlight state's 'spectacular progress'

Massachusetts students achieved impressive scores on international math and science tests, performing better than students in most countries and in the U.S. as a whole, though still lagging behind some of the powerhouse Asian nations and city-states.

*The New York Times* used the term "spectacular progress" to describe the math results in Massachusetts and Minnesota compared to the last time state-specific tests were given in 1999.

"Our teachers and students should be extremely proud of these results," said MTA President Anne Wass. "All those who claim that public education is going down the tubes or that we have to curb the collective bargaining rights of teachers in order to improve education should take note that Massachusetts, a strong union state, is doing very, very well in these subjects that are so important for our economic future."

The test, called the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, compares scores for samples of students in grades 4 and 8. In all, 59 countries participated, along with Massachusetts and Minnesota.

Massachusetts fourth-graders ranked second worldwide in science, surpassed only by Singapore, and tied for third in math. The state's eighth-graders tied for first in science — in a statistical dead heat with Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Japan — and ranked sixth in math.



Your Membership Delivers You a World of Benefits!

EUROPE | CARIBBEAN | ASIA/PACIFIC | THE AMERICAS | MEDITERRANEAN | AFRICA/EGYPT | MEXICO | CRUISES

## Discover the World at Discounted Prices!

Your MTA Vacation Center makes exploring the world easier and more affordable than ever! We've partnered with America's leading tour operators to offer our members exclusive discounts not available to the general public.



**Egypt & the Nile**  
12 days from only ~~\$2,729~~

**Now \$2,579 for MTA members Only!**

**MTA members receive \$150 per person exclusive savings!**



## MTA to fight attack on bargaining rights

Continued from Page 2

pursued entering the GIC, the local unions have agreed after negotiating the specific terms. Public employees have rejected entering the GIC in only one community where a plan was fully negotiated and brought to them for a vote.

**Why target employees?** The speaker fails to mention that in some instances, municipal leaders have resisted going into the GIC, not the unions. In North Adams, for example, all of the public employee unions have asked to bargain over entering the GIC, while the mayor has refused to even discuss the issue.

**The GIC could not accommodate a huge influx of municipal employees.** The GIC has been very supportive of incorporating municipal employees into the system. That said, the agency has explained that it would be a bureaucratic nightmare to extend the service to a large number of municipal employees at the same time. Proceeding at a measured pace, as the law envisions, will result in a smoother transition.

More than 70 all-inclusive itineraries across the globe!

- Walking tours
- Food & wine tours
- Safari tours
- Spa tours
- Europe
- Asia/Pacific
- Africa/Egypt
- Mediterranean
- The Americas

Go to [www.MTAvacations.com](http://www.MTAvacations.com) or call 1.888.466.2849!  
Use promo code: MTA 910002



# TeLLS results point to concerns, opportunities

Continued from Page 9

## Principals also report concerns.

Among the findings:

- Only 3 out of 10 report they have sufficient time to focus on instructional leadership issues.

- About three-quarters (73 percent) say they spend less than three hours per week on instructional planning with teachers.

**More problems are reported in high-poverty schools.** Despite the Education Reform Act of 1993, which changed the school financing system to provide more resources to high-poverty schools, educators in these schools still generally report worse teaching, learning and leading conditions than educators in more affluent districts. Overall, 68 percent of educators in the highest-poverty schools agree that their schools are good places to work and learn, compared to 85 percent in the most affluent schools. In the highest-poverty schools:

- Only two-thirds believe the curriculum taught meets the needs of their students, compared to 82 percent in the most affluent schools.

- Just over one-third feel the school is environmentally healthy, as opposed to 60 percent in the most affluent schools.

- Only half believe they have sufficient instructional materials, compared to 70 percent in the most affluent schools.

**Teachers and administrators view working conditions differently.** There are significant gaps between the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding how school leadership addresses teacher concerns. Although it would be expected that some differences in perceptions of teaching and learning conditions will exist, the size of the gap in many areas suggests that a better understanding about these different perceptions is needed.

There are significant gaps between the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding how school leadership addresses teacher concerns.

- About half of all teachers (55 percent) said they believe they are recognized as educational experts, while 93 percent of principals believe they are.

- Only 43 percent of teachers feel they are meaningfully involved in

educational decisions, while 91 percent of principals believe they are.

- Only one-third (33 percent) of teachers find there is sufficient non-instructional time for collaboration with their colleagues, compared to 58 percent of principals.

On the plus side, there was substantial agreement on several points. Among them:

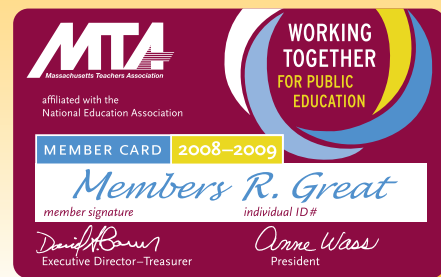
- The faculty is committed to helping every student learn (93 percent of principals and 90 percent of teachers).

- The curriculum taught is aligned with the state's curriculum frameworks (95 percent of principals and 94 percent of teachers).

- Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction (96 percent of principals and 84 percent of teachers).

## Strength in numbers means GREAT BENEFITS for members.

With more than 107,000 MTA members, we have the collective bargaining power to negotiate with major companies and to offer you **exclusive and exceptional programs at a reduced cost.** Look through your **2008-2009 MTA Benefits & Discount Directory** to learn about the following programs and the more than 1,000 places that offer member-only discounts!



### Send me more information about these MTA programs:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>HOT!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Group Auto Insurance                               | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW Credit Card                       | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Discount Dental Plan           |
| <b>HOT!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Home, Renters, and Condo Insurance                 | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW Certificate of Deposit            | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Preferred Provider Dental Plan |
| <b>HOT!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Disability Insurance                               | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW Money Market                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine Service                   |
| <b>NEW!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> SBLI Term Advantage Life Insurance (MTA members only!) | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW Personal Loan                     | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Auto Rentals                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Term Life Insurance (New members only!)                        | <i>Four new programs coming in February 2009!</i>              | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Cruises                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Term Life Insurance 5-Year Renewable                           | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Heating Oil Discounts             | <b>NEW!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Hotel Discounts    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Term Life Insurance 10- to 30-Year Renewable                   | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Workers' Compensation             | <input type="checkbox"/> Anheuser-Busch Parks               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Permanent Life Insurance                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Small Business Insurance          | <input type="checkbox"/> Florida Discounts                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Travel Accident Plan   | <b>NEW!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Vacation Center       | <input type="checkbox"/> California Discounts               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Tax-Sheltered Annuity  | <b>NEW!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Discount Directory    | <input type="checkbox"/> Knott's Berry Farm                 |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Orlando Vacations                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hersheypark                        |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Long-Term Care                    | <input type="checkbox"/> York's Wild Kingdom                |
|   | <b>HOT!</b> <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Home Mortgage Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Six Flags _____                    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> MTA Dental Insurance Plan             | Indicate location: Calif., Mass., N.J., N.Y.                |

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Local Association \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your suggestions for new discounts: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you missed an issue?



Find back copies of MTA Today online!

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



MTAB PROGRAMS ARE SELF-FUNDED AND NOT SUPPORTED BY MEMBER DUES.

CUT OUT AND MAIL OR FAX THIS FORM TODAY.

Fax: 617.557.6687

Web site: [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com)

MTAB, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108

# 2009 MTA GOVERNANCE POSTINGS

## MTA election information available on Web

Interested in running for an MTA or NEA elective position? You just need to visit the MTA Web site, [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org), to see how it's done.

Prospective candidates can now go to [massteacher.org/mtaelect](http://massteacher.org/mtaelect) to view and print out the articles on current vacancies and self-nomination forms with bio/statement grids, where applicable.

The same articles and self-nomination forms with bio/statement grids were published in the October/November issue of *MTA Today*.

Hard copies are available from Diane Foley in the MTA Governance Division. Her phone number is 617.878.8217, her e-mail address is [dfoley@massteacher.org](mailto:dfoley@massteacher.org) and her fax number is 617.742.7046.

If you have the information mailed, please remember that it is crucial to allow sufficient time to fulfill all electoral requirements and to submit forms to the MTA by the posted deadline.

Candidates for Regional Executive Committee Member, Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee Member,



### ELECTION TIMELINE



#### Nomination Deadlines

<b>December 30</b>	Candidate Recommendation Committee
<b>January 9</b>	Statewide, Regional and Retired Delegates to NEA RA
<b>January 9</b>	Regional Ethnic Minority Delegates to MTA Annual Meeting
<b>January 9</b>	Statewide Retired District Delegates to MTA Annual Meeting
<b>January 9</b>	NEA Director
<b>March 6</b>	Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee Member
<b>March 6</b>	Regional Executive Committee Members
<b>March 6</b>	District Directors
<b>March 6</b>	Retired Members Committee
<b>March 6</b>	At-Large Director to Represent Ethnic Minority Membership
<b>April 10</b>	Student Delegate Election to the NEA RA (if applicable)

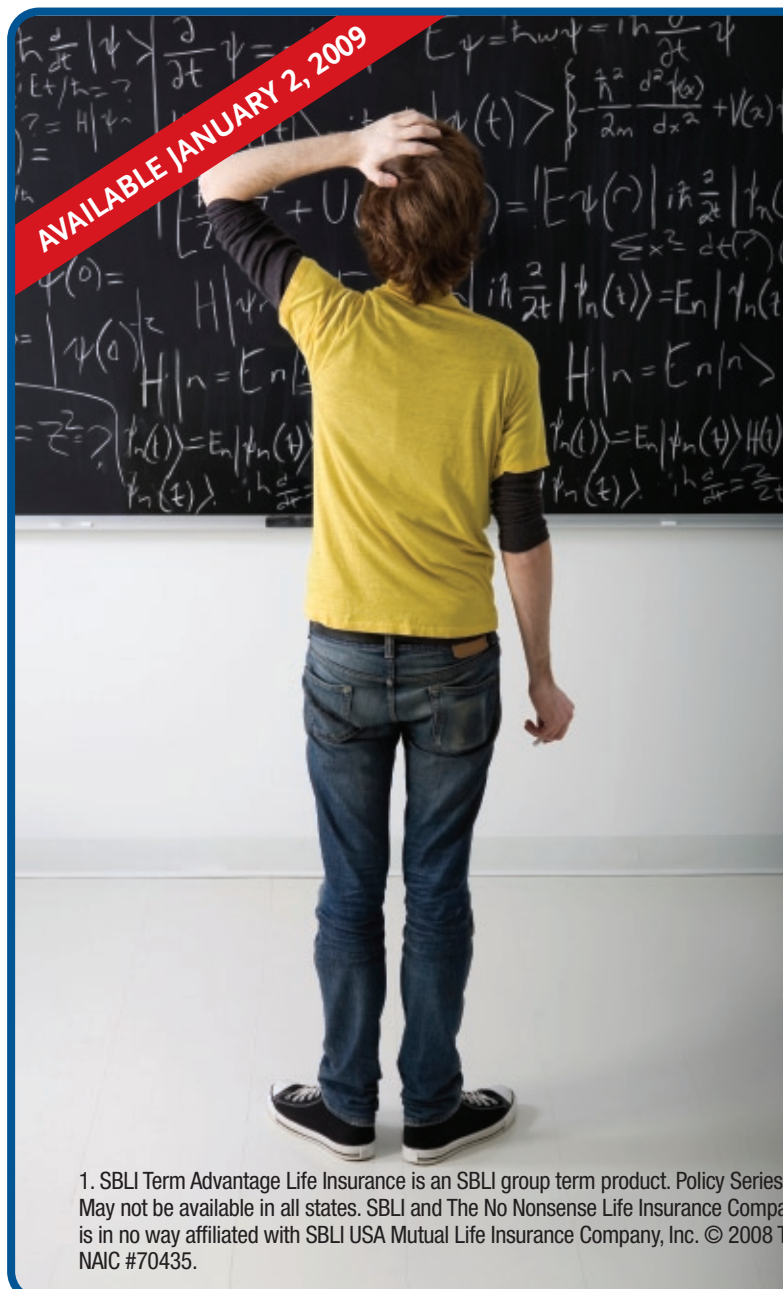
#### Deadlines for Proposed Amendments

<b>January 9</b>	Bylaws and Standing Rules
<b>January 9</b>	Resolutions

At-Large Director for Ethnic Minority Membership, District Director and NEA Director are required to file nomination papers with signatures.

Candidates for delegate and committee positions must file self-nomination forms with bio/statement grids. Self-nomination forms for the

Retired Members Committee are on [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org) and were also printed in the October/November issue of the *MTA Reporter*.



## Now here's a NO-BRAINER:

MTA members will pay less for SBLI Term Advantage Life Insurance ... *guaranteed.*

SBLI is happy to announce the MTA has chosen SBLI as a preferred provider of term life insurance. SBLI Term Advantage Life Insurance<sup>1</sup> provides low-cost, no-nonsense coverage and MTA members will pay the most competitive rates ever offered (your family members are eligible for our already low regular rates).

From our home in Woburn, Massachusetts, we've been protecting families such as yours for more than 100 years and have an A+ Superior rating with A.M. Best for financial stability.

Call or click today to see how low *your* special MTA members-only rate will be!

Get your FREE, no-obligation, MTA members-only rate quote:

[www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com) or  
**877.272.SBLI**  
 (877.272.7254)



1. SBLI Term Advantage Life Insurance is an SBLI group term product. Policy Series G-46, GC-46.

May not be available in all states. SBLI and The No Nonsense Life Insurance Company are registered trademarks of The Savings Bank Life Insurance Company of Massachusetts, which is in no way affiliated with SBLI USA Mutual Life Insurance Company, Inc. © 2008 The Savings Bank Life Insurance Company of Massachusetts, Woburn, MA. All rights reserved. NAIC #70435.



## Cultivating the next generation



The MTA's Minority Leadership Training Team participated recently in an NEA-sponsored program designed to cultivate new union leaders and enhance minority involvement. The training was held in Boston Oct. 11-12. From left to right are Valerie Price, UMass Boston; Chris Guzman, Plymouth-Carver; Christine Boseman, UMass Boston; Julia Monteiro Johnson, Dennis-Yarmouth, an NEA director; Barbara Lora, Brockton; Susan Baker, Falmouth, chair of the MTA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee; Maureen Carlos, an NEA director from Worcester; Chris Zellner, Bedford; and Salina Allen-Sharp, UMass Boston. This year's team includes four new program graduates, Allen-Sharp, Boseman, Price and Zellner, as well as two new team members, Guzman and Lora.

## CEPP brings home two first-place awards from NSAI competition

The MTA Center for Education Policy and Practice staff won two top awards in the 2008 competition sponsored by the NEA National Staff Association for the Improvement of Instruction.

The awards were presented to the CEPP staff on Nov. 14 at the NSAI annual meeting in Hilton Head, S.C. NSAI is an organization that represents the policy, practice and professional development staff from NEA and the state affiliates.

- *Tomorrow's Teachers: Preparing the Education Workforce for 21st Century Skills*, an in-depth policy paper with specific recommendations on how to best prepare pre-service and new teachers for successful careers in public education, was awarded first place in the Written Product category.

- *Using TeLLS Data to Address Achievement Gaps*, a manual designed to help facilitators and teams use the results from the recent Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey — TeLLS — to develop action plans, earned a first-place award in the Intensive School Improvement category. The work was funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and offered to districts through a collaboration with AFT Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.

The CEPP staff includes Director Kathleen J. Skinner, Professional Development Specialists Ralph Devlin, Beverly Miyares and Nora Todd and support staff Beverly Eisenman, Diane Gately and Jill Jackson. The MTA Professional Development Committee, CEPP associate staff and TeLLS facilitators also contributed to the award-winning initiatives.




## NEXT STOP: Walt Disney World Resort®

Make sure you book your next Disney vacation through MTA's new discount program with Orlando Vacations. Members get exclusive discounts on Disney vacation homes, hotel packages, attraction tickets and much, much more.

Find out how magical your next vacation can be – visit [orlandoemployeediscounts.com](http://orlandoemployeediscounts.com) and enter username **mtambresaves**.

[www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com)  
800.336.0990, ext. 5226





# Obituaries

**Francis A. Butkiewicz**, 82, of Leicester. Taught at Worcester Boys Trade School for 30 years, retiring in 1988. Oct. 27.

**Paula E. Cavallaro**, 60, of Beverly. Was an elementary school teacher in Georgetown for 35 years. Nov. 2.

**Eileen A. Clark**, 85, of Grafton. Was an elementary school teacher in Upton and Grafton for many years. Oct. 5.

**Edward M. Cookson**, 64, of South Hamilton. Was a science teacher

at Salem High School for 28 years, retiring in 1998. Oct. 17.

**Carl E. Dahlstrom**, 75, of Grafton. Served as the head of the toolmaking department at Worcester Vocational Technical High School for 20 years before retiring in 1995. Sept. 27.

**Magda B. Fiorini**, 92, of South Weymouth. Taught at the Johnson and Wessagussett schools in Weymouth for 33 years, retiring in 1985. Before working in Weymouth, taught at Wesley Junior High School, Walpole

Junior High School and Halifax Elementary School. Sept. 23.

**Thelma Garnett**, 80, of Cambridge. Was an educator at the Bennett-Hemenway School in Natick for 31 years before retiring in 1988. Oct. 3.

**Francis W. Gunville**, 77, of Rockland. Was a teacher and guidance counselor in the Weymouth schools. Nov. 7.

**Dorothy M. Harkins**, 92, of Woburn. Taught in the Revere school system for more than 40 years. Sept. 28.

**Basil T. Jelly**, 84, of Northampton. Was a middle school teacher in Maine and in Dalton, where he taught reading, language arts and social studies for over 30 years. Sept. 26.

**Carl E. Johnson**, 59, of West Barnstable. Was a teacher of English and grammar at Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School and an instructor of English and literature at Cape Cod Community College. He retired in 2006. Oct. 28.

**Selma Kuppenheimer**, 96, of Worcester. Taught kindergarten at the Heard and Flag Street schools. Oct. 14.

**Ruth MacDonald**, 81, of Bedford. Taught in Florida and New York and at Weeks Junior High School in Newton, Wheelock College and Northeastern University. She retired in 1994. Sept. 27.

**James A. Macero**, of Medford. Taught in the Somerville school system for 25 years, retiring in 1981. Oct. 10.

**Mary Jane E. McArthur**, 79, of Cohasset. Taught for 30 years in the Cohasset, Duxbury and Scituate schools, retiring in 1989. Sept. 21.

**Genevieve G. McEleney**, 89, of Natick. Was a teacher in the Boston schools and later at the Murphy School in Natick. Oct. 29.

**Helen L. Meehan**, 66, of Woburn. Taught in the Chelmsford, Woburn and Billerica public school systems. In 1973, she joined the Special Education Department in the Woburn Public Schools, where she served in many roles for the next 28 years. Oct. 30.

**Jean F. Mitchell**, 82, of Somerset. Was the librarian and media specialist for 24 years at Somerset High School, retiring in 1994. Oct. 24.

**Anthony Oliveri**, 58, of Everett. Taught in the Everett Public Schools. Oct. 26

**Maureen A. Perkins**, 55, of Holyoke. Was a biology teacher and an advisor for the School Match Wits Team at Holyoke High School. Nov. 1.

**Robert W. Seaward**, 84, of Littleton. Was a teacher, coach and guidance counselor in Concord for 33 years. Oct. 25.

**Eleanor M. Shannon**, of Everett. Taught in the Everett Public Schools. Oct. 25.

**Lawrence Sugarman**, 61, of Randolph. Taught music in the Braintree schools for over 35 years. Nov. 8.

**Stanley J. Wnuk**, 79, of Ware. Taught for three years at Edgartown Junior High School. Later taught English and Spanish at Hardwick High School and Quabbin Regional High School in Barre, retiring in 1988. Oct. 22.

**Edward F. Wright**, 98, of Swansea. Was the automotive shop department head for three years at Diman Regional Vocational High School. Also started the Vocational Division at Case High School, where he taught for 20 years. Oct. 2.



Some things in life will take you by surprise.

## Needing Long-Term Care shouldn't.

A long life is a gift, full of possibility and opportunity. But, as with any gift, it also comes with responsibility.

At some point during the travels, achievements and joys of your golden years, it's likely you'll end up needing extra care. Whether it's home care, assisted living or a stay in a nursing home, you have to plan now to take care of yourself then.

Long-Term Care insurance does so much more than pay dollars. It not only benefits the individual needing care, it also provides invaluable support and peace of mind for family members and other caregivers who will rely on the referrals and resources it provides.

Let MTA help you prepare for a long life with proper Long-Term Care insurance. We can:

- Help you understand the issues around Long-Term Care insurance and explain how it can supplement your current resources.
- Design the appropriate Long-Term Care solution to fit your finances and your future plans.
- Offer competitive rates through a variety of major insurance companies.
- Do research and rate comparisons for you and help you make your final decision.

Remember that your MTA discount is also available for your family members.

Call 888.646.1972, ext. 5102, today  
to schedule a free long-term care analysis.

You can also e-mail us at [info@mtalc.com](mailto:info@mtalc.com), or go to [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com) or [www.mtalc.com](http://www.mtalc.com) to learn more. We are happy to help.

MTA Benefits, Inc.  
20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108-2795  
[www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com)



MTA MEMBER DISCOUNT AVAILABLE



# Classifieds

## BED AND BREAKFAST

\$40 A NIGHT FOR TWO! — 6,000 B&Bs worldwide. "Perfect hosts! Couldn't have been a better trip." Anthony and Linda, Hudson, Mass., #8044. Easy! Choose your hosts — we do the rest! Complete membership directory: [www.educatorstravel.com](http://www.educatorstravel.com). P.O. Box 5279, Eugene, OR 97405. 800.377.3480.

## CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

RAISE SCIENCE TEST SCORES and inspire a scientist. Since 1998, Jeff Danger, Science Ranger, has offered three science enrichment programs — Physical Science Variety Show (most popular), Earth Science/Global Warming and Hands-On Chemistry Workshop. Call 617.899.4140 or search on Google for "Jeff Danger, Science Ranger."

IN-SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS — Hands-on Geography: K-2nd — *Introduction to Maps and Globes and Habitants*; 3rd — *Massachusetts Geography*; 4th — *U.S. Regions*; 6th — *World Geography, American History — Colonial America, Pioneers, Ancient History — Ancient China, Greece, Archaeology of Ancient Civilizations*. Contact Carol Cohen by calling 781.784.5197, e-mailing [carolcohen@verizon.net](mailto:carolcohen@verizon.net) or visiting [www.nved.com](http://www.nved.com) on the Web.

## EDUCATION/LICENSURE

NORFOLK COUNTY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION — Have an Initial license? Want to earn a Professional license? Norfolk County Teachers Association and Framingham State College offer DESE-approved programs in elementary, early childhood, special education and middle school math and/or science. For information, contact Program Director Judy Riley Brown at 617.733.1782 or e-mail [nctalicensure@comcast.net](mailto:nctalicensure@comcast.net).

ADMINISTRATOR LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you are looking for a district-based, cost-effective program for licensure as an administrator, consult the Web site of The Education Cooperative (TEC), [www.tec-coop.org](http://www.tec-coop.org), and click on "Professional Development and Licensure." Courses are offered in Dedham in cooperation with Boston University.

TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you have Preliminary licensure at the secondary level and are seeking

Initial licensure, The Education Cooperative (TEC) has a program for you. Go to [www.tec-coop.org](http://www.tec-coop.org) and click on "Professional Development and Licensure." Courses offered on weekends and during the summer at our Dedham site.

ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE PROGRAM — If you are seeking a Professional license for grades 1-6 in elementary, mathematics or special education, consult the Web site of The Education Cooperative, [www.tec-coop.org](http://www.tec-coop.org), and click on "Professional Development and Licensure." The district-based programs are offered in Dedham in cooperation with Framingham State College.

## EMPLOYMENT

PAID INTERNSHIPS — From museum education and exhibition planning to marketing and public relations, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem offers a dynamic semester-long paid internship program for high school and college students. Call 978.745.9500, ext. 3217, or visit [pem.org/support/employment](http://pem.org/support/employment) for more information.

PENIKESE ISLAND SCHOOL — Teaching position in small residential program for troubled teenage boys. Certification in 9-12 English or History and SPED or willingness to pursue. Requires living and working in rustic island setting; 10 overnights/month. Salary negotiable; benefits. Résumé and cover to John Quilty, P.O. Box 161, Woods Hole, MA 02543. E-mail: [jquilty@penikese.org](mailto:jquilty@penikese.org).

SPORT COACHING OPPORTUNITIES — Thundercat Sports ([www.thundercatsports.com](http://www.thundercatsports.com)) is looking for teachers to work Dec., Feb. and April break camps. Camps will be in Arlington, Lexington, Newton, Needham and Wayland. Sports include basketball and sports jam (soccer, floor hockey and basketball). Summer directing opportunities also available. Please go to the Web site and select employment or e-mail [jobs@thundercatsports.com](mailto:jobs@thundercatsports.com).

TOUR GUIDES WANTED: Active and retired teachers. Tell the tales of Boston. Boston's newest Trolley Tour Company. Excite! Entertain! Educate! Commercial driver's license a plus, but will provide complete training. Good pay, tips and commission. Signing bonus after 90 days. Flexible schedule. Call 617.217.8962.

TEACHERS: DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUMMER INCOME? Could you accommodate, provide 3 meals per day for, and teach English to a foreign student in your own home in the greater Boston-North area? Rates from \$550 per student per week with 15 hours of tutoring. For more information, e-mail [Mia.Corinha@yahoo.com](mailto:Mia.Corinha@yahoo.com) or call 781.581.5933.

## FUNDRAISING

FUNDRAISER? Forget the candy bars and candles; put the fun back into fundraising! Get "MAGIC AND MIND GAMES" THE SHOW! 90 MINUTES OF AMAZEMENT AND FAMILY FUN. Featuring Off-Broadway Mentalist Michael Paul and the comedy magic of Mark Thompson (20-year MTA member). Perfect for grades 6-12. Call 413.949.0799.

## PD

GEOGRAPHY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM — Workshop for Educators. February 18 & 19, 2009, in Sharon. For teachers of grades 1-6. 12 PDPs. Be introduced to innovative cross-curricular teaching methods. The workshop is available to be brought to individual school districts. Visit [www.nved.com](http://www.nved.com) for workshop description. Contact Carol Cohen at Now Voyager Education: 781.784.5197 or [carolcohen@verizon.net](mailto:carolcohen@verizon.net).

SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS! — Want resources, opportunities, professional development? Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies. Visit [www.masscouncil.org](http://www.masscouncil.org) for more information.

TRAINING FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS — How can teachers and paraprofessionals collaborate more effectively and differentiate instruction successfully in the classroom? TRAINING! Available to facilitate professional development in instructional strategies and differentiated practices for paraprofessionals. For district-based workshops, please contact Maureen Scala-Freeman, retired teacher, Lesley adjunct faculty member, NELMS consultant, at 617.962.7106 or [mscalafr@lesley.edu](mailto:mscalafr@lesley.edu).

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE EDUCATOR ENEWS — Sign up for the Educator Enews to receive advance notification of special discounts (including savings on January field trips!), professional development offerings, field trip

resources and much more. Sign up today: [mos.org/educator](http://mos.org/educator).

## TRAVEL

APRIL SCHOOL VACATION — Italy, departing April 18 from Boston and visiting Verona, Venice, Florence, Bologna, Pisa, Assisi and Rome. Airfare, excellent hotels, meals, guided tours. References available from previous participants. Great price: \$1,779 pp double occupancy. E-mail [MeandBobMcGee@aol.com](mailto:MeandBobMcGee@aol.com).

## TRAVEL/STUDY

SEMINAR: EDUCATION IN IRELAND (6 Graduate Credits) — July 2-25, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland. Study aspects of the Irish education system and history, literature and culture of Ireland. Call or write Barney Keenan, coordinator, 127 Glen Road, Gorham, NH 03581; 603.466.2972 or [Lilysky@ncia.net](mailto:Lilysky@ncia.net). The trip of a lifetime!

## VACATION RENTALS

LOON MT. LUXURY CONDO — 3 bedrooms, 3 baths. Sleeps 8-12. All amenities: linens, pool, Jacuzzi, saunas, health club, gas fireplace and central air. Award-winning winter and summer resort. In the heart of the White Mountain National Forest and Franconia Notch. Call Bob at 978.686.1568 or e-mail [bobnynex@comcast.net](mailto:bobnynex@comcast.net).

CAPE COD WEST YARMOUTH — Colonial Acres Resort on Nantucket Sound. Sleeps 4, 8/1-8/8, 8/8-8/15. Call for price and details: 781.335.6849.

MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA — Magnificent 3BR, 2BA oceanfront condo in a gated community w/many amenities. Photos available. Please call 508.942.4166 for rates/availability.

KISSIMMEE CONDO FOR RENT — 4 miles from Disney. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, sleeps 8. Handicap accessible, all amenities. \$75 per night. E-mail [smk98@verizon.net](mailto:smk98@verizon.net) for availability.

EAST FALMOUTH — Sunny 3-bedroom, 1-bath Cape. Cathedral ceilings w/deck, outside shower, washer/dryer. Stroll to secluded bay beach, picturesque walkway & public boat landing. Less than a mile to Bristol & Falmouth Heights beaches. Close to shopping. \$1,000 weekly. 508.872.5870.



**WWW.MASSTEACHER.ORG**

**YOUR WEB LINK TO NEWS, MEMBER ADVOCACY  
AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**





# It's the right time to be with The Hanover.

To Our Valued MTA Customers:

In these uncertain economic times, it's especially important for you to know that The Hanover is strong and stable and ready to meet your insurance needs. I am writing to reassure you that now, more than ever, you can be confident in the strength of The Hanover and our ability to deliver on our promises—to be there when you need us most.

The financial turmoil we are witnessing has rattled markets and impacted investors' savings around the globe. Some companies have been ruined while others are frozen in place, lacking the confidence, strategy or financial resources to regroup and move forward.

## **THEN THERE IS THE HANOVER.**

For more than 150 years, The Hanover has weathered some of the most severe disasters in our nation's history—floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and economic depression. And each time, we emerged even stronger than before.

## **TODAY IS NO EXCEPTION.**

Thanks to our sound business strategies and conservative investment practices, The Hanover is in excellent financial condition.

- The Hanover Insurance Group has over \$2 billion in capital, which is well in excess of what is required of top-rated companies by the rating agencies.
- Approximately 95 percent of our investment portfolio consists of cash and investment-grade bonds.
- We are the only financial services company that has been upgraded in 2008 to investment grade by both Moody's and Standard & Poor's, while at the same time earning a positive outlook from A.M. Best and being rated Excellent.

These would be excellent results under any circumstances, but to maintain this high level of performance during the deepest financial crisis in modern times is without precedent.

## **AND WE AREN'T STOPPING NOW.**

While other companies make cutbacks, we continue to launch competitive new products and services to help meet even more of your coverage needs for auto, home, and business.

Our company is committed to making a difference in the communities where we live and work. We focus on education, helping youth reach their full potential and inspiring a passion for learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

With our financial strength, strategic focus, and deep partnership with MTA, this is truly the right time for you to be with The Hanover.

Thank you for the confidence and trust you place in our company.

Sincerely,



Edward C. Ruhl  
Regional Vice President

Policies are underwritten by one or more of the following: The Hanover Insurance Company, The Hanover American Insurance Company, Citizens Insurance Company of America, Massachusetts Bay Insurance Company, Allmerica Financial Alliance Insurance Company and Allmerica Financial Benefit Insurance Company. Product availability and services may vary by state. Member discount is available to Massachusetts residents only.

Date: December 2008 | Financial and ratings information as of 9/30/2008

LC 08-277





# Library becomes symphony hall

## Music Matters visit inspires second-graders in Everett

By Bob Duffy

The library at the Albert Parlin School in Everett was turned into a miniature symphony hall one recent afternoon, giving students a taste of the joy that classical music can provide.

The occasion that drew members of the Lexington Symphony to the school was the kickoff of the 2008-2009 season of the MTA WCRB Music Matters program.

“The goal of our partnership with WCRB is to support students’ interest in music — and it really works,” said MTA President Anne Wass. “When children get to meet musicians and actually try out instruments, they get a chance to unlock their creativity while also exploring something new and having a wonderful time.”

Studies have shown that students who learn the art of making music have increased achievement levels, regardless of socioeconomic background.

Schools throughout the Commonwealth are eligible to apply to participate in the program, which serves to supplement existing classroom efforts. Music Matters is a collaboration between the MTA and Boston classical radio station WCRB.

A visit usually begins with a live musical introduction, followed by individual player presentations about their specific instruments. Demonstrations are next, along with a discussion of the four families of musical instruments in a symphony.

The musicians then play a number of familiar popular classical pieces, such as the theme from *Jaws* and music from *Star Wars*. Each instrument is highlighted, and the musicians play some pieces that inspire the students to clap and sing. Afterward, the class is divided and the players let each student try out a violin, a viola and a small cello designed especially for small children.

Although there is a standard curriculum, visits can be tailored to address schools specific needs.

Teacher Kim Auger, who hosted the visit, said the second-graders in her



Children in teacher Kim Auger’s second-grade class enjoyed a live performance by members of the Lexington Symphony during the kickoff event for the MTA WCRB Music Matters program. They also had the chance to try out instruments under the guidance of the musicians who visited their school. Music Matters events will be going on for the rest of the year.

Photos by Bob Duffy

class were thrilled about having the chance to meet the musicians during the event on Dec. 1.

“This was a wonderful experience for my students, and they are still talking about it,” she said. “Having an opportunity to hear and talk with professional musicians was a fantastic inspiration for them — and they loved

being able to actually handle the instruments.”

Three of her students have started taking violin lessons, she noted.

Station Manager Denise Deluca said WCRB is proud to participate in the program with the MTA.

“This program is part of WCRB’s commitment to bring the joy of

classical music to students throughout Massachusetts,” Deluca said.

*Any elementary school can apply to host a Music Matters event, though the number of visits is limited. To apply, educators should visit [www.wcrb.com](http://www.wcrb.com) and download the appropriate form.*

### Programs promote student achievement

The MTA has established educational partnerships through its Reading Matters Foundation with the Boston Red Sox, the Boston Bruins and the Boston Celtics, as well as with radio station WCRB.

Along with the 2008-2009 season of Music Matters, the Bruins’ I Can Excel School program — which includes *Nets and Numbers*, the successor to the highly successful *Bruins by the Numbers* math game —

and the MTA Boston Celtics Honor Roll program are now under way.

The programs offer the chance for students to get discounted tickets to Bruins and Celtics games, autographed merchandise, posters, bumper stickers and school visits, among other things.

The I.C.E School program, which is administered through the Bruins’ community relations office, provides preK-through-eighth-grade

Please turn to MTA/Page 20

# MTA Today

Volume 39, No. 3  
December 2008/January 2009

Official Publication of the Massachusetts Teachers Association



The MTA Advantage is a publication of MTA Benefits, a subsidiary of the Massachusetts Teachers Association

## SBLI offers MTA members its lowest insurance rates

\$500,000 IN TERM LIFE COVERAGE AVAILABLE FOR AS LITTLE AS \$18.71 PER MONTH

Amid bailouts, bankruptcies and sagging retirement funds, Americans are seeking a reliable investment to protect their families' financial future. Now, thanks to a partnership with SBLI of Massachusetts, MTA members have one.

Beginning Jan. 2, all MTA members are eligible for SBLI Term Advantage, a unique, financially stable term life insurance product designed specifically for educators.

"We pushed the envelope so we could offer MTA members a dynamic term insurance package that is second to none," said SBLI

President and CEO Robert K. Sheridan. "I am thrilled to be working with MTA Benefits. The solid history, reputation and core values of both organizations make for an ideal relationship."

He added, "I am married to a woman who taught for 27 years; I know educators are exceptional."

So, too, are MTA members' term rates, thanks to SBLI. They are the lowest the company offers and can be secured at the same annual premium for 10, 15, 20, 25 or 30 years.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Our holiday hopes for you

*We hope to brighten your lives in these difficult times by saving you money and enhancing your lifestyle with the best in programs and benefits.*

*We will always be there for you and be worthy of your trust.*

*These are our hopes, our gifts to you this holiday season.*

*~ Your friends at MTA Benefits*



### Sample monthly premiums, 20-year level term, Preferred Plus rates<sup>(2)</sup>

Age <sup>(1)</sup>	\$300,000 Coverage	\$500,000 Coverage	\$1,000,000 Coverage
25-34	\$13.31	\$18.71	\$30.45
35	\$13.57	\$19.14	\$31.32
40	\$17.49	\$25.67	\$44.37
45	\$26.36	\$40.46	\$74.82
50	\$37.06	\$58.29	\$110.49

1) Age nearest birthday.

2) Monthly premiums available only when using SBLI's Automatic Plan (APP). Some conditions apply. This rate is for very healthy applicants. Your rate may vary based on health and underwriting. Policy series G-46, GC-46.

## An MTA member since 2000

### MIKE KOZIARA ~ Another fan of MTA Benefits

**PROFESSION:** Physical education teacher, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School

**A MEMBER OF:** Framingham Teachers Association

**What he likes about his profession:**

"The best part of teaching physical education on the elementary school level is that I get to work with every child in the school. My job is not to teach them to be athletes, but to expose them to sports as a whole and to develop their skills. In classes and one-on-one sessions, I focus on self discipline, self awareness, interaction with others, development of motor skills, individual effort and other fundamentals. All the rest comes later."

**How he uses his MTA Benefits:**

"I try to be very vigilant about taking advantage of discounts because MTAB offers

so many good deals. One of our family's favorite places is the New England Aquarium, which gives MTA members free admission. MTAB discounts also have saved me money on gym memberships. I'm seriously thinking of participating in MTAB's auto insurance and new term life insurance programs."

**What he likes about MTA Benefits:**

"MTAB discounts encourage members to take advantage of activities and programs that they might not otherwise consider. MTAB provides a great service for members."







# MTAB Board member spotlight Kim Auger

Kim Auger, a member of MTA Benefits Board of Directors and president of the Everett Teachers Association, promotes MTAB to members of her association. She explained why in a recent question-and-answer session.

## Q: What makes you a fan of MTA Benefits?

**A:** MTAB provides quality service and impressive savings. No other association in the state offers anything like it. For example, I started saving about \$1,200 a year when I switched my auto insurance to MTAB and then saved even more by adding a home insurance policy. When I travel – which I do frequently – I cut costs by using the MTA Hotel Discount Directory. In my role as president of the Everett Teachers Association, I highlight MTAB discounts and send reminders out monthly to the more than 500 members of my local. This is a big hit with members.

## Q: What do you think of MTAB service?

**A:** It's unbelievable. MTAB staff members are some of the best people I've worked with in my entire career. They are so pleasant, professional and responsive. When you call, someone is there to help you immediately with any situation.

## Q: What advice do you have for MTA members?

**A:** Take advantage of the amazing benefits offered by MTAB. Each member should carefully look through the new MTA Benefits & Discount Directory and discover the more than 1,000 ways to save – everything from discounts on car insurance to free admission at museums. It could add up to thousands of dollars a year in savings.



Kim Auger, a member of MTA Benefits Board of Directors and president of the Everett Teachers Association.

For information on MTAB programs and services, call 800.336.0990 or visit [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com).

## No wonder members like MTAB!

MTA members talk about the service and savings they receive from MTA Benefits. No wonder they're fans.

**'I am very happy with MTAB programs and benefits. They have saved me a lot of money over the years.'**

Gale Barry, Melrose Education Association

**'My MTA card gives me free admission to the Children's Museum in Easton. It's a wonderful place to take my class. Our field trip was phenomenal, despite the rain. The staff there is committed to children and was helpful in planning the field trip.'**

Isabelle DeBarros, Taunton Education Association



## Look at these 9 for 2009

Hot new programs and the latest Discount Directory listings

1. Take advantage of **MTAB's new term life insurance program** with MTA member rates starting at just \$13.31 a month. (For details, see the article on page 1 of this issue of the *Advantage*.)
2. Take off on a fabulous trip through the **new MTA Vacation Center**, where you'll receive exclusive discounts available only to MTA members ([www.mtavacations.com](http://www.mtavacations.com)).
3. Make it a healthy new year with a **Life Line Screening** to help prevent strokes and other life-threatening events. Save with your MTA card (888.753.1137).
4. Give yourself a **great hair day at Salon Acote** on Boston's Newbury Street at a 25 percent discount ([www.salonacote.com](http://www.salonacote.com)).
5. Start feeling good at **Bikram Yoga** – and feel even better with the 10 percent discount ([www.bikramyogastoughton.com](http://www.bikramyogastoughton.com)).
6. Treat yourself to **beautiful jewelry** and the 30 percent discount at Stephen Leigh Jewelers in Quincy (617.471.4824).
7. See rooms full of **famous historical figures** at Madame Tussauds in New York City. You and each family member save \$6 on admission costs ([www.nycwax.com](http://www.nycwax.com)).
8. Watch **fast and exciting short-track racing** at Lee USA Speedway in Lee, N.H. Buy one ticket and get one free for regular events ([www.leeusaspeedway.com](http://www.leeusaspeedway.com)).
9. Get tickets to **see the Boston Bruins and the world-champion Boston Celtics!** Be sure you are registered for MTAB's Quick Takes e-news so you can receive advance notification when these HOT tickets become available to MTA. To register, visit Giveaways and Offers at [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com).



Editor: Maryann C. Robinson  
The MTA Advantage is published four times a year as a supplement to MTA Today by MTA Benefits, Inc.

20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108  
Tel: 800.336.0990 • Fax: 617.557.6687  
Web site: [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com)

No dues dollars are ever used to market MTA Benefits programs.



# The Tip Sheet

Make 2009 a year to enjoy the world around you – and to help save it



## Exhilaration of the slopes

Ski downhill or cross country this winter in some of New England's most incredible snowscapes. More than a dozen ski areas in the region offer discounts to MTA members that help offset costs of family outings. These include such favorites as **Ascutney Mountain Resort, Ski Butternut, Okemo Mountain Resort and Wachusett Mountain Ski Area**. Look for others in the MTA Discount Directory.



## PARTY TIME at the New England Aquarium

Have a birthday party your child will never forget! The New England Aquarium offers MTA members a party package that includes seeing an IMAX or IMAX 3D film, a display of your child's photo on the screen with a special birthday wish and lunch or dinner at a Faneuil Hall restaurant. The cost is \$20-\$25 per person, less a discount for MTA members in attendance. Party package add-ons include reduced aquarium admission (free for MTA members), tours and food/gift shop packages. Book at least two weeks in advance with Kelly Clifton at 671.973.6508 or [kclifton@neaq.org](mailto:kclifton@neaq.org).



## Cliff hanger



He's more than 65 million years old but brand new to the Museum of Science in Boston. Meet Cliff, a nearly complete fossilized Triceratops skeleton, one of the world's rarest paleontological finds. Cliff, now featured in the museum's **Colossal Fossil: Triceratops Cliff** exhibit, made history when he was discovered in the Dakota Badlands in 2004 and made headlines when he was auctioned off by Christie's in Paris this past spring. The size of an elephant, he is foreboding, with a massive three-horned skull. Visit [www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org) for exhibit information. Admission is free for MTA members. Contact Sandra Fasules at [sfasules@mos.org](mailto:sfasules@mos.org) about free preview passes to other MOS attractions, including its IMAX theater and Planetarium.

## Exciting the imagination

Gleaned from various bestseller lists and Oprah picks, the following three books collectively will excite, amaze, inform and entertain you. **The Story of Edgar Sawtelle**, by David Wroblewski. This is a highly emotional coming-of-age tale and mystery that revolves around Edgar Sawtelle, a boy born mute who uses sign language to communicate with the family's dogs. **You: Being Beautiful: The Owner's Manual to Inner and Outer Beauty**, by Michael Roizen and Mehmet Oz. This guide helps you look, feel and be beautiful by showing you how to improve your appearance, increase energy, work on relationships and deal with other issues. **The Given Day**, by Dennis Lehane. Set in Boston at the end of the First World War, this story is about two families – one black, one white – caught in political and social unrest that involves revolutionaries, anarchists, immigrants, Brahmins and ward bosses. Check the MTA Discount Directory to see which bookstores offer MTA discounts.

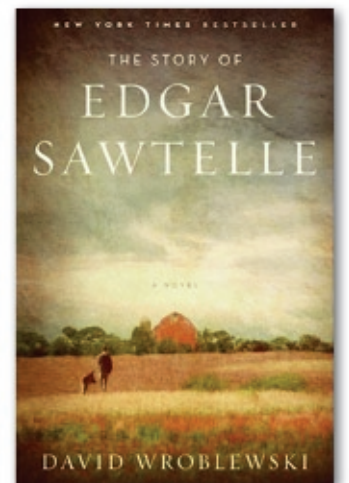


PHOTO COURTESY EARTHWATCH INSTITUTE

## Adventure in the Amazon Basin

Join an Earthwatch expedition that helps conserve the Amazon Basin's pink dolphins, giant river otters, monkeys, turtles, fish, macaws and other exotic local species. While aboard a vessel based on The Ayapua, a vintage boat from the Amazon's rubber boom period, you'll work with a team of skilled Peruvian biologists to collect information about the wildlife populations in river areas. This is just one of the hundreds of amazing adventures offered by Earthwatch that help save the environment. Find out about fellowships for educators at [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org).

## Drives to legendary local sites

Plan to visit one or more of the following places in New England found in the guidebook **1,000 Places to See Before You Die**. Vacation at **Mount Desert Island**, Maine's national treasure, with its captivating natural beauty, which lured the Astors, Fords and Vanderbilts. Take the cog railroad, built in 1869, to the top of **Mount Washington**, where you see a vast panorama of the White Mountains. And stay at **Crisanver House**, a grand country resort on 120 acres in Vermont's Green Mountains, which is also listed in the **MTA Hotel Discount Directory**.



For information on Tip Sheet items and other things to do, see your 2008-09 MTA Benefits & Discount Directory or view it online at [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com).



# SBLI offers MTA members its lowest insurance rates

(Continued from page 1)

“We are able to offer these very competitive rates because we know insurance and how to manage risk,” Sheridan noted. “The profile for educators reflects a professional group with a good lifestyle and a sound financial base. This allows us to stretch limits and reduce rates for this group.”

## SBLI® Important opportunity for members

Although SBLI Term Advantage is a group program, policies are individually underwritten, which will ultimately help MTA members secure better rates. So while members can take advantage of a group discount, they can also lower their premiums based on their individual health status. A member purchasing insurance when young and healthy will lock in the lowest possible annual premium for the entire term he or she selects.

Regardless of age or health, buying life insurance has never been more important than it is today. According to life insurance industry data, a high percentage of Americans are uninsured or underinsured. If a primary wage earner dies, it is likely that 22 percent of families with dependent children will have immediate trouble meeting everyday living expenses and another 26 percent will be able to cover



SBLI President and CEO Robert K. Sheridan and his wife, Jean, a former member of the Brockton Education Association.

expenses only for a few months. Insured husbands carry an average of \$235,600 in life insurance, while wives carry an average of \$147,800. It would typically require twice these amounts to replace income for seven to 10 years.

“Sufficient life insurance should be part of every MTA member’s financial portfolio,” said Bob Wills, MTAB’s insurance manager. “Members need to be prepared for the possibility of not being there to pay for mortgages, college tuitions and other expenses.

“There’s never been a better time than now for members to buy term life insurance and get this protection,” Wills said.

## A proud history dating back more than a century

Like MTA, SBLI is a proud local institution with a unique history. The company was created in 1907 as a result of legislation designed by Louis Brandeis, a Boston attorney and later U.S. Supreme Court justice, to make safe, low-cost life insurance available to everyone. Insurance industry scandals and prohibitively expensive life insurance at the time helped ensure the legislation’s passage. Over the years, SBLI weathered dramatic market downturns – including the Great Depression and the current fiscal crisis – by maintaining a steady, conservative course. Today, SBLI has an A+ rating from A.M. Best for superior financial stability.

**Get your free, no-obligation, MTA members-only rate quote for SBLI term life insurance by visiting [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com) or calling 877.272.SBLI (7254).**

May not be available in all states. SBLI and The No Nonsense Life Insurance Company are registered trademarks of The Savings Bank Life Insurance Company of Massachusetts, which is in no way affiliated with SBLI USA Mutual Life Insurance Company, Inc. ©2008 The Savings Bank Life Insurance Company of Massachusetts, Woburn, MA 01801. All rights reserved. NAIC Number: 70435.

## How far can you go with \$300 in gas money?

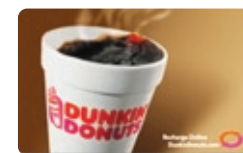


### You'll find out if you're the winner in the MTAB Quick Quote Giveaway.

Sign up for a Quick Quote on auto insurance from Dec. 15, 2008, to June 7, 2009, and you will be automatically entered into the drawing for a \$300 gift card for gas. Visit [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com), go to the box that says “Save on Auto Insurance!” and follow the instructions. You’ll also receive a free \$5 Borders® gift card just for receiving a quote. The giveaway winner will be announced June 8 on the “What’s New – Member News” page of the Web site.

## Yes, we want YOUR picture!

We’ll give you a \$5 Dunkin’ Donuts® card if you send us a photo of yourself using your MTA card at any of the more than 1,000 locations listed in the MTA Discount Directory and we use it on our Web site or in an MTAB publication. Visit [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com) and click on “What’s New — Member News” for details.



©2008. DD IP Holder LLC. All rights reserved. The Dunkin’ Donuts trademarks, logos and designs are registered trademarks of DD IP Holder LLC and used under license.



## It's in the bag!

Maybe you’ll be one of the winners! Sign up Jan. 12-25 for the Winter Giveaway of three \$100 grocery gift cards, courtesy of Vista Financial, partner in the MTA Disability Plan. Go to [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com), click the “register” button under Giveaways & Offers and follow the instructions. The winners will be announced Jan. 26 on the “What’s New – Member News” page of the Web site.

### A Wii winner – wow!

Diane Depczenski, a member of the Somerville Teachers Association, won a Nintendo Wii system – a \$300 value – in the Fall Giveaway.



All program and pricing information was current at the time of publication (December 2008) and is subject to change without notice. To find out what may have changed, please call MTA Benefits at 800.336.0990, ext. 5226.