What Did You Read?

Ninth-Annual Read Across America Draws Great Participation from FEA

FEA members again joined millions of fellow NEA members and reading enthusiasts around the country and around the world to celebrate the life of Theodore “Dr. Seuss” Geisel on March 2, 2006. This year’s NEA Read Across America event, the ninth annual celebration of reading, drew an estimated 45 million participants.

FEA members made sure the event extended around the world by holding reading events in the various countries DoDEA schools represent.

For a look at where and how some of our FEA members participated in Read Across America this year, see the photo spread on pages 6 and 7.
Notes from the President
Sheridan Pearce

NSPS - As of this writing, we are still awaiting the judge’s decision on the lawsuit FEA filed to exclude our bargaining unit specifically from the so-called National Security Personnel System. Visit www.feaonline.org or read my email update to get the latest on that lawsuit.

The Department of Defense has now appealed the ruling against NSPS handed down as a result of a separate lawsuit filed by the coalition of DoD labor associations to which FEA belongs. Details of that ruling are also available on www.feaonline.org. The Pentagon’s appeal of that ruling was no surprise to anyone and the labor coalition may also appeal the ruling because of a few points that went against us.

The threat of NSPS is far from over, but FEA remains cautiously hopeful that our legal successes in fighting this flawed plan will continue.

SMS - If NSPS has been the biggest possible headache for our membership recently, the Student Management Solution (SMS) would probably qualify as the biggest actual headache. FEA has been passing on to DoDEA staff the many complaints and problems our members have reported to us. DoDEA has already begun to review SMS and significant changes are expected to be made in the program.

EXCESS/TRANSFERS - 246 transfer placements were made in this year’s DoDDS Transfer Program. Many additional placements of excess educators have been made since the Transfer Program ended in mid-March. The closing of schools — and even entire bases — because of the military’s transformation plans has created a lot of anxiety and stress among our members, some of whom are still awaiting placement. Happily, there was no Reduction in Force in DoDEA as a result of these closings, and FEA has been assured that positions will be found for all of this year’s displaced educators.

SALARIES - The salary picture for DoDDS educators continued to brighten this school year, with teachers receiving an average increase of 2.88 percent, up from 2.08 last year and less than 2 percent in the 2003-2004 school year. Other positions in DoDDS received similar increases from last year. Because DoDDS salaries are based on average salaries for urban districts in the U.S., the increases hopefully indicate that states and local communities are no longer trying to balance their budgets at the expense of schools and the employees who work in them. Thanks go to FEA Executive Director/General Counsel H.T. Nguyen and Communications Coordinator Gary Hritz for their work with the DoD Wage and Salary Division to finalize the pay schedules.

DESS STUDY - One issue that has remained very quiet this year is the study of whether to transfer control of DDESS schools to local communities. Further action on this study had been expected after the Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) process was finalized last fall. But as of late April, we’ve heard nothing further about the topic — which is fine with us. Perhaps, between the strong public outcry from military families on the affected bases, the Government Accounting Office’s negative assessment of the transfer study itself, and the realization that transferring the schools would only hurt the quality of education for students on-base and off, Congress and the Pentagon have decided that transferring control of DDESS schools is simply not a good idea. FEA will remain vigilant for any developments on this topic.

SUMMER BREAK - Some of our DDESS schools may be through for the year already by the time this newsletter arrives. The rest of us are only a few weeks away from the end of classes. I want to wish all of our members a safe, relaxing and fun summer. If you are in the Orlando area in late June, please visit our FEA Annual Membership Meeting (details on page 5). Wherever you spend your summer, I hope it’s as stress-free and enjoyable as you deserve.
Plan to Party When School Reconvenes

In recent years, we’ve had to ask our members and local leaders to take on some big challenges: writing Congress to fight NSPS and the threat of DDESS school transfers, reporting the many headaches that have resulted from SMS so we can urge management to fix them, and keeping your cool as we face the uncertainty and upheaval caused by the restructuring of the military.

Now, FEA wants you to party.

Membership party, that is.

And we want every one of you, the members of FEA, to get involved.

As we celebrate FEA’s 50th anniversary in 2006, we are asking every local to hold their own “Welcome Back” party at the start of the 2006-2007 school year. While we want you all to celebrate the start of a new school year and catch up with your co-workers, we also have an ulterior motive in mind: building membership in FEA.

Many locals already have gatherings such as this at the start of the school year. For those who don’t, I’m asking you to start a new tradition. All it takes is some food, perhaps a few games to serve as ice breakers for the new people, and a DVD player.

A DVD player?

Yes, because at this party, we are asking our local leaders to show everyone a promotional video FEA is now producing about our organization.

The video won’t be too long - only about seven minutes - so it won’t get in the way of your party. Its purpose is to provide an overview of FEA to both current and prospective members, and hopefully make the job of recruiting new members a bit easier.

As you know, your membership in FEA is what keeps our organization strong. Thanks to the support of over 6,000 members such as you, FEA has been able to stand up for employees and their rights, even in the very hostile political climate we are now facing.

In order to make sure our organization remains strong for another 50 years, we must continue to actively seek the support of every single DoDEA faculty and staff member who is eligible to join.

As an FEA member already, I’m sure you are aware of the many positive services we provide to our membership: advocacy, legal protection, extensive Member Benefits programs through our affiliation with NEA, communications on the topics that impact you, and much more. Our members are FEA’s best representatives, and I want to ask each of you to reach out to at least one person who is not a current member.

Experts say the number one reason why people don’t join associations such as FEA is because they are never asked. We want to make sure we don’t make that mistake. Use the promotional video we will send to your school this summer, throw a party to celebrate getting back together, and urge EVERYONE at your local association to get involved in membership recruitment.

The easiest thing in the world to do is say, “It’s not my responsibility” or, “Let someone else do it for me.” The fact is, FEA is YOUR organization. YOU elect its officers, YOU make decisions through your elected representatives, and YOU benefit by keeping the association strong.

So I hope YOU will be at the party when school starts next year, and I hope YOU will bring a friend. Better yet, speak with your local president or building rep now about how YOU can help organize the party. There are a million ways you can help: anything from printing and distributing invitations to bringing a bag of ice. I’m asking each one of YOU to find a way to get involved.

Thank YOU, and have a great summer break!

Has your local held successful membership parties in the past?

Send your tips and suggestions for what does and does not work to fea@feaonline.org

We’ll post them for others to read.
Excellence in Education

Yvonne Brown, a teacher at Kadena Elementary School in Okinawa, has been selected as FEA’s nominee for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence.

Each state affiliate of NEA is allowed to nominate one of its members to compete for the annual award, which is presented by the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

As FEA’s nominee, Brown has a chance to win the Foundation’s top prize of $25,000. The top five finalists for the award receive the Horace Mann–NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence, which include a $10,000 cash prize.

Winners are chosen based on a nominations packet they submit, detailing their achievements in the classroom, the community, and the association. The winners are announced and recognized at the annual NEA Foundation Awards Gala, to be held next February in Washington, DC.

Hall of Fame Nurse

A Würzburg Elementary School Nurse and FEA member will be inducted into the Academy of Fellows by the National Association of School Nurses during a ceremony in New York City, June 30, 2006.

Margaret Barry, a familiar face for the students in Würzburg since August 1993, was notified by NASN that she would receive the highest recognition that members can be awarded during the organization’s 38th annual conference.

In a letter, Sue Will, NASN President, told Barry, “Your service to school nursing and student health and NASN is impressive and most deserving of this very special award. I look forward to seeing you in New York City.”

The Overseas School Health Nurses Association recognized Barry as the ‘School Nurse of the Year’ for the 1997-1998 school year. Induction into the Academy of Fellows is bestowed on members who have made significant, unique, and extraordinary achievements in contributing to the advancement of school nursing. Unlike School Nurse of the Year Awards, which normally honor excellence in local practice, induction into the Academy of Fellows is achieved through demonstrated excellence and prominent contributions to the field of school nursing in a manner that has had a far-reaching effect.

Since 1989, Barry has been a member of the DoDDS-Europe nurse cadre, tasked with the implementation of a health office data base system, according to Kathryn R. Weldon, DoDDS-E Instruction Support Specialist, Pupil Personnel Services. In her role as district consultant she serves her peers, providing training, consultation, and support in a challenging task. She is the informal liaison on nursing issues in her district and is continually involved in advocating training and resources for her peers. She has become a valuable consultant for DoDDS-Europe.

“The paperwork that needed to be completed was mind boggling, but she met all the criteria and even surpassed a lot of it,” said Yvonne Carstens, Hohenfels High School nurse. She added, “This makes two DoDDS school nurses to be selected to this hall of fame for school nurses. The first one was (former FEA Secretary/Treasurer) Laura Bauernfeind who retired from DoDDS two years ago.”

Formula For Success

FEA member Elaine Edwards, a science teacher at Landstuhl Middle School, is the 2006 winner of the Armed Forces Communication Electronics Association (AFCEA) Education Foundation Award for science. The award includes a $1,000 cash award for Ms. Edwards to purchase resources and equipment to support a project she proposed, as well as recognition at an awards banquet. Congratulations!
Orlando to Host FEA/NEA Membership Meetings

All FEA active and retired members are invited to attend the FEA Annual Membership Meeting, being held in late June in Orlando, Florida.

The FEA meeting will take place June 29 and 30 (please note: the meeting dates were misprinted in the FEA pocket calendar) at the Royal Pacific Resort hotel, adjacent to Universal Studios theme park.

As always, our meeting is being held just prior to NEA’s annual meeting and RA.

The NEA Annual Meeting will be held June 30 through July 5 at the Orlando Convention Center. The Representative Assembly (RA), which consists of nearly 10,000 delegates elected by their fellow members, takes up four of the six days.

While only elected delegates can participate in the NEA-RA, any FEA member, active or retired, can attend the FEA annual membership meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to allow FEA members to hear directly from FEA governance and staff on issues affecting our association and its membership.

The NEA-RA is the world’s largest democratic deliberative body. The delegates debate and vote on numerous issues affecting public education and set association policy for NEA.

Elections for RA delegates from FEA are held by the FEA Areas (Stateside, Europe and the Pacific) each year. More info: www.feaonline.org/members/meeting.htm

MB Giveaway

Set for summer? Maybe a $100 gift card from Target would help! NEA members can register anytime during the month of June 2006 in the Free Giveaways area of the NEA Member Benefits Web Site (www.neamb.com) for a chance to win one of three $100 Target Gift Cards. Use it to buy a cooler and a couple of lawn chairs, and relax until the school bells ring again! Giveaway entry begins at 12:00 a.m., ET, on June 1, 2006, and ends at 11:59:59 p.m., ET, on June 30, 2006. No purchase necessary to enter.

NEA Program to Give Books to Libraries & Students in Need

In February 2006, NEA launched Books Across America, a nationwide program aimed at providing books to public school libraries and students in need. In the first year, the program is focusing its efforts on getting books to public school libraries damaged by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

At the end of February, Books Across America joined NEA’s Read Across America program to visit the Gulf Coast region on a week long Reading Relief Tour to deliver new books and money to more than 40 public school libraries.

The tour kicked off on February 27 and culminated in New Orleans with Read Across America Day on March 2.

Gulf Coast public school libraries are in desperate need. Nearly a year following the hurricanes, many library shelves remain empty. The statistics are troubling and only begin to tell the story. In Louisiana, approximately 90 school libraries are considered a total loss, and New Orleans Parish alone lost 63 percent of its 126 school libraries. It will take Mississippi more than $38 million to replace library and media centers.

Want to help restock the shelves of Gulf Coast public school libraries through NEA’s Books Across America? Here are a few things you can do:

- Donate money or new books.
- Coordinate a book drive or fundraiser.
- Volunteer and help spread the word.

To find out more about how you can get involved, visit www.nea.org/booksacross/

Get ‘Works 4 Me’ Working For You

Each week, Works4Me subscribers receive an E-mail message with practical classroom tips submitted by the real education experts: your colleagues.

To join the mailing list, simply send an E-mail message to: join-works4me@list.nea.org (no subject or message needed).

To submit a tip to Works4Me, send it in an E-mail message to: owner-works4me@list.nea.org.

Be sure to include where and what you teach. If they use your tip, you’ll receive a small gift.

An archive of past Works4Me tips can be found at: www.nea.org/works4me/
Clockwise from above - Brussels American School; Kinser Elementary School in Okinawa; Sullivans Elementary School in Japan; Barkely Elementary School at Fort Campbell; C.C. Pinckney Elementary School at Fort Jackson; Lakenheath Elementary in England; Sullivans Elementary School in Japan; and Schweinfurt Elementary School in Germany.

Learn more about the annual Read Across America celebration by going to:  
www.nea.org/readacross  

Photo courtesy of U.S. Army
Encourage Reading All Year Long

**Works4Me**
www.nea.org/tips/content/reading.html
Tons of reading ideas from your fellow NEA members.

**Literacy Connections**
www.literacyconnections.com
Information on reading, teaching and tutoring techniques and much more.

**Reading Rockets**
www.readingrockets.org
Lots of articles and resources to help launch young readers.
Call NEA Member Benefits Toll Free
The NEA Member Benefits program provides many programs and services to FEA members. Please contact Member Benefits with questions about any of their services using the following toll-free numbers in applicable areas:

Stateside
1-800-637-4636

Overseas
First dial the AT&T Direct Access Code
In Germany and UK 0800-2255288
In Japan 00539-111

Then dial Member Benefits at 800-893-0396

And don’t forget the Member Benefits Web site. You can access information on all of NEA-MB’s programs, get current rates on CDs and investment funds, and sign up for other services.

Preventing ID Theft
Following Simple Safety Practices Can Add Layers of Protection to Your Information

Practice Good Home Safety
• Secure all information that lists any family members’ social security numbers.
• Tear or shred all personal information that will go into your trash.
• Request vacation hold on mail and newspapers delivered to your home.

Practice Good Personal Information Safety
• Remove bank receipts, invoices, etc. from your purse or wallet daily.
• Remove or limit key personal data kept in your organizer.
• Lock your cell phone when not in use.
• Photocopy both sides of everything in your wallet or purse and store in a secure location.
• Never carry your original social security card or number in your wallet.
• Watch for “shoulder surfers” when using an ATM or Debit card and when writing checks.

Practice Home Computer Information Safety
• Keep operating system software and anti-virus software updated on home computers (even those not used to surf the Internet).
• Install, keep up to date, and run spyware-monitoring software.
• Use a firewall.
• Passwords: remember them; don’t write them down. Use strong passwords that include upper and lower case letters as well as symbols or numbers.
• Change passwords at least twice a year.

Protect Your Credit
• When checking credit history, check ALL social security numbers in the family including those of minor children. A rising problem is the use of minor children’s social security numbers. Often this theft is not found out until several years later.
• FBI recommendation – remember SCAM
  S Be stingy about giving out your personal information to others unless you have a reason to.
  C Check your financial information regularly, and look for what should be there and what should not.
  A Ask periodically for a copy of your credit report.
  M Maintain careful records of banking & financial accounts.

For more information on protecting your identity, visit these sites:
www.ou.edu/oupd/idtheft3.htm
www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fraud/idtheft.html
We’re helping make members’ lives better—from the first day—right through retirement.

NEA Member Benefits is dedicated to leveraging the strength and size of the Association to help make life better for you and your family. We provide a broad array of exclusive, money-saving products and services designed specifically to meet your ever-changing needs.

To learn more about the many ways NEA Member Benefits can help you and your family get the most out of your membership, just take a moment and write us at NEA Member Benefits, 900 Clopper Road, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-1356, or visit us at neamb.com/betterlife.

Representantes que hablan español están disponibles a pedido.

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History Educator Award
The History Channel Outstanding History Educator Award is given annually to an educator who has made an exceptional contribution to history education through the National History Day (NHD) program. The winner will receive an award of $5,000. Nominees must have demonstrated success in involving students in the program, service to the NHD contest, service in the discipline of history in general, and leadership in professional development. NHD also offers a $1,000 “Richard Farrell Teacher of Merit Award” to an educator who used the program as part of the curriculum. Application deadline is May 20, 2006.
www.nhd.org/AwardsandGrants.htm

Free Audiobooks Online
LibriVox provides free audiobooks online and here’s how they do it. Volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain, and then LibriVox releases the audio files back onto the net (podcast and catalog). The goal is to make all books in the public domain available, for free, in audio format on the Internet. LibriVox is a totally volunteer, open source, free content, public domain project. Would you like to volunteer? LibriVox is looking for volunteers to read, listen, edit, suggest books, and work on their data base. Maybe you’d like to see how many books are currently available, or listen to a book?
http://librivox.org

NSDC Web Site for Teacher Leaders
The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Web site offers many opportunities for teacher leaders: opportunities to participate in projects and conferences with other educators; to read publications by other educators; and to become a member of a dynamic online community of teacher-leaders (see special promotion for NEA members below). The organization offers online publications, written by educators for educators. Full access to the publications requires registration and a fee. To learn more about NSDC and a 3-month trial membership, visit the NSDC web site.
www.nsdc.org
For information on a special discounted membership to NSDC’s Teachers Teaching Teachers (T3) program, go to:
www.nea.org/takenote/images/nsdcNEAoffer.pdf

Free Stuff For Educators
From posters and bookmarks to lesson ideas and office supplies, there is plenty of free stuff out there for teachers -- if you just know where to look! NEA's web site features a page listing a variety of free resources you might want to check out.
www.nea.org/resources/free-stuff.html

Resource for Motivating Students
Curriculum Associates, a leading publisher of research-based supplemental curriculum materials and tools, is offering teachers a free online professional development course with techniques that generate enthusiasm for learning within students. The e-training course, “Motivating Students to Learn,” consists of three lessons:
1. an explanation of the theory behind motivation;
2. an outline of five areas or practices that enhance motivation with audio quotes from teachers and students;
3. and teacher-tested activities, games and lesson plans designed to increase motivation
www.curriculumassociates.com/professional-development/topics/Motivation/index.htm
Summer School

Here are some great teaching ideas from [www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com) to incorporate learning into your students’ summer vacations. Find many more ideas at the Education World site.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer Sarcophagus and Other Summer Activities</th>
<th>Where in the World are We Vacationing?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students use longitude and latitude coordinates to locate vacation destinations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subjects: Measurement, Geography, Grades: 3-8</td>
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<tr>
<th>Summer Food Safety: True or False?</th>
<th>Design a Roller Coaster</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students take a true-false food safety quiz.</td>
<td>Students learn about physics as they build a virtual roller coaster.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject: Health, Grades: 6-12</td>
<td>Subjects: Applied Math, Physics, Grades: 6-12</td>
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<tr>
<th>Roller Coaster Roundup</th>
<th>Create a Safety Slogan and Poster</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students complete a chart showing the characteristics of roller coasters and answer questions.</td>
<td>Students examine a safety-in-the-woods Web page, then write a slogan and design a poster for another summer safety concern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject: Mathematics, Grades: 3-8</td>
<td>Subjects: Language Arts, Visual Arts, Safety, Grades: K-5</td>
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**Federal Education Association**

Gary Hritz, Editor  
H.T. Nguyen, Executive Director

Contributions, letters, photographs and other submissions to the FEA Journal are welcome and should be sent to the editor’s attention at the address below.

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May 9 is National Teacher Day, a part of Teacher Appreciation Week.

Congratulations!

May 7-13
Teacher Appreciation Week
May 9
National Teacher Day
May 10
National School Nurse Day
May 13-14
FEA Pacific Leadership Council

June 29-30
FEA Annual Membership Meeting
Orlando, FL

30-July 5
NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly
Orlando, FL

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