



October 2011

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I was reading over my October message from two years ago. At that time, we were deep into a gubernatorial campaign for Governor Corzine. We were pushing members to support one of the few New Jersey governors that truly supported 'Public Education'. The message from NJEA was to think strong and hard about how we would preserve our reputation, our salaries and our health and pension benefits as we cast our votes. That message was to encourage us to watch how our 'friends' would treat our schools in Trenton, if they were elected along with Governor Corzine. I know many of my colleagues didn't believe the message NJEA told us. They said, "He can't be that bad." Hundreds of our SCEA members voted for Governor Christie and our former friends. Now, we have a debacle on our hands like none other in our association history.

Basically, everything that was said would happen, has happened, and there is more to come. The credibility of our state association truly was upheld. It went from 14 carat to 18 carat.

We were once the 800-pound gorilla, now it seems we are the 300-pound teddy bear. We can regain our status as a force to deal with OR get run over if we don't step up and take on the challenges. I don't know about you, but I don't believe in getting run over twice. There are already bills filed on tenure, seniority, merit pay, and vouchers. All of these can and may be passed during the lame duck session unless we do something about it NOW!

Have you seen the governor on YouTube? It seems he has the Democratic legislature in his pocket and after this election he's "going to take it to the teachers' union". NJEA was right on target about the outcome after the elections then and the next election is coming.

Members continually ask the question, "What is NJEA doing?" I'm preaching to the choir here, but we all know the reality is, WE ARE ALL NJEA! It can no longer be just the elected leaders doing all the work, we all have to work. The 'times' are challenging for everyone. Traditionally when times get hard, Americans pull together, work out the details and move forward, not turn to blame each other.

Legislators thought of us as a multi-headed hydra. They needed to cut off one talking leader head and then take on another. I think we should become a Chinese finger puzzle, the more the politicians force their bad education ideas, the stronger we should become.

And the more uncomfortable they become. There is not a segment of our membership who can say, "Oh he can't do anything to me".

This election is the about stemming the tide. It's about reinforcing the beach head. We cannot take out all the back stabbing Democrats this time around without giving the governor a complete lock on the legislature. We are so fortunate to finally have candidates who understand the importance of public education and value the work we do. Ed Selby, Leslie Huhn and Jim Nye are running for state office on the 24th Legislative District. We have to send Ed Selby to the NJ Senate and Leslie Huhn and Jim Nye to the NJ Assembly in Trenton.

WE CAN GET THIS DONE! But I can tell you, we can't get it done without everyone participating.

SCREA Welcomes Candidates

The Sussex County Retired Education Association invited the three NJEA endorsed candidates for Legislative District 24 to speak at their first meeting on September 19th at the Lafayette House. Ed Selby, candidate for NJ State Senate as well as a retired teacher, college professor and SCREA and NJEA member, spoke eloquently and passionately. He addressed issues that impact educators such as pensions, benefits and collective bargaining and championed middle class concerns like fair taxes and good jobs. Leslie Huhn and Jim Nye, candidates for the State Assembly, echoed Selby's words. Their message was so powerful that \$600 was raised for their campaign by meeting's end.

If you want to make a donation or learn more, go to their website www.Democratic24.org. You can meet them at an Open House the SCEA will host on Thursday, October 27th from 4:00-6:00 at the Tri-Co Plaza Community Room on Route 206 in Augusta. Complimentary wine and cheese will be served.

FYI: Legislative District 24 includes all of Sussex County; Allamuchy, Belvidere, Blairstown, Frelinghuysen, Hardwich, Hope, Independence, Knowlton, Liberty, Oxford and White in Warren County and Mt. Olive in Morris County.

Marie Kovacs NJEA Executive Committee



WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

As public employees, we are all experiencing the effects of the legislation that was passed on June 28, 2011. If you are not already contributing a larger percentage of your income to your health benefits, you will be contributing an additional 1% to your pension starting October 1.

Additionally, legislative changes dealing with tenure, evaluation and merit pay are being considered. If you have not yet been convinced that our jobs have become politically dependent, please read all the latest information on njea.org.

The good news is that we have the opportunity to make a difference in Legislative District 24. NJEA has endorsed three Democratic candidates; Ed Selby for Senate; and Leslie Huhn and Jim Nye for the Assembly. All three candidates are well informed, passionate, and ready to make a difference in Trenton.

Currently, we have over 4,000 members in Sussex County who are registered voters. Each and every one of our members **MUST** vote in this election if we are to send a message to the legislature that **WE WILL REMEMBER IN NOVEMBER!** We must let the legislature know that we will negotiate, but we will not be dictated to. Our future as professional public educators is on the ballot.

Please take advantage of one of the many opportunities to meet the candidates during October. I know you will be convinced that Ed, Leslie and Jim will make a difference if we send them to Trenton.

Susan Sawey, SCEA Rep. to the NJEA Government Relations Committee