



## *Strictly Speaking*

**By, Robert Strickler  
AEA President**

I received the following letter from one of our colleagues. I know exactly how this person feels because as an elementary prep teacher I also was bounced around to different sites for a couple of years. Luckily, I only had to be at a different site one day a week. It is difficult. So next year, be sure to welcome, help, support, and be a friend to any “new” teacher on your staff. Here is one teacher’s story:

Being bounced from place to place and grade level to grade level is not easy. As humans, it is only normal that we become comfortable with our surroundings, understand the “norms”, etc... Apparently if we are teachers, it is not “Normal” for us to be comfortable with any of these things. Many of us were displaced, let go, or bumped last year from our positions. We knew the protocol for our sites, where you get paper, fire drills, yard duty, passing procedures, recess, staff meetings, office procedures, school committees, and the list goes on. I am sure that I am not alone when I say it was very hard to come to a new site. Of course the teachers were welcoming, but nobody really took it on to help me out with the protocol and norms so to speak. Sure people offered help in the form of the question, “What do you want to know?”, but nobody said, “Here

let me show you around and let you in on a few things.” I am not the type of person who automatically knows the questions I need to ask. Furthermore, if you have only ever worked at one site, why would it be any different anywhere else? After all, this is one Unified District.

This year I have thought a lot about what it is like to be new, again. I have wished all year that there was a binder, a committee, something to help me out and just to get to know my place a bit better. I know in the future when someone is new to my site; I will do all I can to help them out. Just because someone has been in the district 10 years, 15 years, does not mean that they know what every site is like. Especially when you get the call last minute telling you where and what you will be teaching. I know that many of us can relate to this feeling, across the board – computer teachers, P.E. teachers, and music teachers. We have all been through BTSA or something like that, but as a teacher in the position that many of us were in last year, we don’t have that at our fingertips. I don’t know what it is like at other sites; I can only speak for what I am experiencing. I would have liked to have seen a binder this year or have a teacher sort of take me under their wing and show me the ropes of my new stomping grounds. Protocol is very important at any job, so whose job is it to help the new teacher at your site?

With the new round of pink slips in our district having gone out, it is time to start thinking about these things. You never know where you will end up, or who will end up on your staff.



## **AEA Website and Email**

Be sure to check out the AEA website ([antiochteachers.org](http://antiochteachers.org)) for current information, forms, calendars, contract, etc.

Would you like to receive periodic informational emails from your association?

You may sign up by going to our website and clicking on the “AEA Email” tab on the side navigation bar and entering your home email address.

AEA would like to be able to email important information occasionally, as it is more cost-efficient and quicker than regular mail and less intrusive than phone calls. AEA will not give out your email to any other organizations or companies. You may remove your name from the list at any time. Just enter your email address to make sure you are enrolled and to verify your information is complete and correct.

Also, make sure that you are not blocking email from us by entering this email address in your own contact list:  
[aeapresident@sbcglobal.net](mailto:aeapresident@sbcglobal.net).

If your email address changes, you can enter the new address. The old one will be automatically deleted when email is returned or if you unsubscribe.

Your AEA Site Rep will be asking for your current home email address, as well so we can create an AEA member only database.

 **KUDO'S CORNER**

Congratulations to **Michelle Flowers** from Park Middle School for bringing in a lot of cash and merchandise to her school. She has had 8 projects funded by Donors Choose this year totaling \$6,000 for K'Nex Building Materials, Language and Math games, a Netbook computer, books on Math, and storage containers for K'Nex and snacks for her after-school Construction Club. She also received a grant for a \$3,000 field trip by Kraft Foods and a \$500 grant for books from "Reading Is the Way Up." Finally, Chevron (partnering with DC) awarded her \$25,000 for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) related materials for Park Middle School. She has had 43 projects funded by Donors Choose in her five years of teaching.

Congratulations to **Valorie Luke**, AEA's 2011 WHO Award winner. Valorie has served AEA as a site rep, a member of the grievance team and a member of the organizing team. She currently sits on the Executive Board and serves as a CTA State Council Rep. She is AEA's Facebook page manager and Chair of the Community Outreach Team. She was instrumental in AEA getting a \$10,000 grant from CTA for our Community Outreach Program.



AEA also wants to extend a huge thank you to **Kim Dobrzensky** for becoming the new chair of the ONE Team.

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**ANNOUNCING.....**

**AEA Executive Board/Calendar Option Election Results**

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Vice President -</b>                 | <b>Valorie Luke</b>   |
| <b>Middle School Liaison -</b>          | <b>Linda Jones</b>    |
| <b>Elementary School Liaison -</b>      | <b>Sarah Odegaard</b> |
| <b>2012-2013 AUSD Calendar Option -</b> | <b>Yes</b>            |



**Upcoming Dates**



**April 27:** RIF (Reduction in Force) Hearings at the district office.

**May 11:** "Day of the Teacher" and Service Award celebration for AEA members at Skipolini's.

**May 14:** WHO (We Honor Ours) Award for ALCOSTA chapters at HS Lordships in Berkeley.

**May 14:** AEA/AMA/CSEA Retirement Dinner at Lone Tree Event Center.

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**Free Money!!!**

Blue Shield of California Healthy Lifestyle Rewards

Did you know that if you have Blue Shield Health Benefits through CalPERS you can earn up to \$200 a year? I've had my health benefits with Blue Shield since 2008 and have earned more than \$500. How?

It's easy. If you have not already registered with blueshieldca.com, you need to do that first. Then all you need to do is join the Healthy Lifestyle Rewards Program. The program is a no-charge, interactive online program available to CalPERS members age 18 and older that rewards you with up to \$200 cash (annually) when you adopt healthy habits.

You earn your first \$50.00 each year by just completing the Wellness Assessment. Then you receive one point per week for going online and completing certain tasks. It only takes minutes to complete your weekly tasks. For example, I track my blood pressure weekly. Once I have entered the data for 12 weeks, I receive another \$50 added to my debit card I first received in 2008. They just continue to add the \$50 increments to your debit card as you receive them.



To get started, check out blueshieldca.com/hlr. Be sure you have first registered with Blue Shield at blueshieldca.com.

## “Unconscious Bias” Workshop



Just ask your colleagues! What new information have they learned as a result of these exciting classes? When you meet someone for the first time there are three factors that register in your mind as you interact with them. They are age, race, and gender. These factors will determine how you relate to them and also your unconscious biases that affect the outcomes of your relationships. We have learned that three-year old children are already programmed to make certain decisions based on their upbringing and environment. We as educators can knowingly challenge ourselves by taking time to question our students and develop meaningful relationships that garner successful students.

Forty-five teachers have participated in this valuable training. They have learned many strategies and they have had a great time. One of my colleagues exclaimed, “I am so sorry to see this class end”. I think this statement says it all. The last workshop was held on Thursday, March 30. Hopefully, we can bring this workshop back to Antioch as more teachers could benefit from this excellent training opportunity. The Antioch Education Association (AEA) in connection with the California Teachers Association (CTA) thanks the Antioch Unified School District for its support as teachers will receive 1.5 district salary credits.

**Submitted by,  
Denise James, CTA State Council Representative**

## Hey, Buddy – Could You Spare a Quarter?

Politics. Education. Intertwined, unfortunately. Politicians have their hands in education, which forces us, the educators, to get our hands into politics. And that’s unfamiliar territory! It’s one thing to read up on current events, but actually participating? *We have enough to do!* We agree that teacher’s voices need to be heard – that we need to be proactive rather than reactive, but how? *How can we be active in local, state and national politics when there’s barely time to get the laundry done?*

Don’t be afraid! Step right up!

How about the opportunity to participate by doing nothing! Yes, you read that right! Nothing! *Is it really that simple? Why yes, it is!*

Money. It’s simply money. As you well know, it helps to have a little cash on hand when you’re playing the game of politics. Buy a billboard, donate to candidates, mail out an educational brochure...

NEA, CTA, and soon AEA, all have **PAC** funds. (Political Action Committee) These monies are separate from the treasury of the union. Members must agree to donate, and must understand for what purpose their money is being spent. These funds can then be used in accordance with strict state guidelines.

*But we’re just teachers! We don’t have that kind of money! How can we raise enough money to influence politics?* No need to worry! We’re teachers! We know that the key to success is to work *smarter*, not harder. We don’t need enormous amounts of money. CTA has research and statistics so we can target our campaigns and get the most out of every dollar. And we don’t need a large team of people – just a small, dedicated team.

*So where’s the part where we help by doing nothing?* It’s so easy! To raise PAC funds, unions often use a “reverse dues check-off.” The union will divert a portion of your dues (think \$0.25 - \$0.50 per month) to a separate PAC fund, unless you say NO. So don’t say NO. Easy! This will come from our current dues. There will be no increase to your local (AEA) dues next year.

The AEA-PAC Fund reverse dues check-off is coming your way this summer. When it does, file that letter away and remember that you’re doing a lot by doing nothing at all!

**Submitted by, Sara Savacool  
PIC Chair; CTA State Council Representative**

## **Mary Allan Fellows Award**

Teachers, here is your chance to honor your colleagues for their passion and hard work. The Antioch Schools Education Foundation is accepting nominations for the fourth annual “Mary Allan Fellows Award” to recognize outstanding teachers who demonstrate innovation and dedication to the teaching profession that is above and beyond the normally high standards of the AUSD. The Fellows who are chosen will receive \$1000 for enhancing academics during the 2011-2012 school year and \$250 for personal use. Nominees might include, but are not limited to:

- Visionary teachers who have special classroom/school projects in mind, but who do not have the funds to implement or complete the project.
- Innovative teachers who have unique ways of empowering students, and designing curriculum to meet the students’ individual needs.
- Teacher leaders who are dedicated to working with the entire school community (including parents) to bring out the best in students.



**Nomination Forms are available online at [www.antioch.k12.ca.us](http://www.antioch.k12.ca.us), or [www.antiochteachers.org](http://www.antiochteachers.org) and must be postmarked by Friday, April 29, 2011; return information is on the form. Please spread the word, because nominations can also be made by parents and students.**

The entire selection process is meant to be a “Celebration of Teachers.” Reflect on a colleague who has touched your life in a personal way, and to whom you want to express your appreciation.

For those of you who are new to the AUSD, Mary Allan retired after 20 years of teaching third and fourth grades at Bidwell and Jack London schools. In 2001 she received the “California Teacher of the Year” award, an honor she attributed to a team

effort provided by her colleagues, district/site administrators, site staff, and parents. She was known for her work with parents and innovative teaching in an effort to bring out the best in students as they worked toward academic excellence.

**Submitted by, Mary Allan**

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## **Antioch Community Outreach**

The Antioch Community Outreach (ACO) group was very excited to present Fremont Elementary School’s PTO with a brand new popcorn machine in January!

When ACO began to reach out to the school PTA/PTO’s in November, 2010, Fremont Elementary stepped forward and expressed a great interest in participating. All four of the officers from the Fremont PTO have attended all of our meetings, and have helped come up with many great project ideas for our group to work on. One of their ideas was to assist the school PTO in raising money by helping them get a new popcorn machine. We were happy to help.

Bidwell and Carmen Dragon have also had parents in attendance at recent meetings. The meetings have been put on hold for the remainder of this school year, but we hope to see many more schools participating at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year.

**Submitted by, Valorie Luke, CTA State Council Representative**



# RETIRING?



**For those of you who are fortunate enough to take the Plunge this year -- we want to remind you and your family and friends that we have a wonderful party planned just for YOU on:**

**Date: Saturday, May 14, 2011**  
**Where: Lone Tree Golf Course**  
**Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**The cost is FREE for YOU and your guest. Any additional attendees are \$45.00 per person.**

**If you are retiring, please contact the AEA office at 754-0300 by Friday, April 29.**

# CTA "NEWS....."

## Upcoming Conferences from CTA

**Presidents Conference** – July 18-22, 2011

Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove

**Summer Institute** – July 31-August 5, 2011, UCLA

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### Notice

Do you ever receive mail or email messages from companies claiming to be a CTA endorsed vendor? If so, you're not alone. Recently, several members received an email from someone identifying himself as "Michael Cohen, California Teachers Association" and referring teachers to "[www.refi.org/teacher](http://www.refi.org/teacher)." Please understand that Mr. Cohen does not represent CTA, the company to which he is referring is not a CTA endorsed vendor, and steps are being taken to stop these emails.

CTA does endorse the following companies:

- The Standard Insurance Company – Life and Disability Products
- California Casualty – Auto and Home Insurance Program
- First Financial Credit Union - Financial Services
- Provident Credit Union (available in Northern California only) – Financial Services
- TSA Special Member and Insurance Services, Inc. – Travel, Entertainment and Discount Services
- Bank of America – Credit Card Services

CTA also has agreements to recommend the following companies:

- NEA Member Benefits
- Mayo – Well-Baby Program
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car – Rental Car Program
- CalSTRS 403(b) Comply

Companies endorsed by CTA must go through a rigorous screening and review process, and must be approved by the Vendor Evaluation and Screening Committee and the CTA Board of Directors. Those companies who receive endorsement by CTA must agree to be subject to the processes of the CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsement Services. The Panel provides advocacy for our members should they have a concern or be unhappy with the products or services of an endorsed vendor.

If you receive information from a company claiming to be CTA endorsed and want to verify whether it is true, or just want to know what companies and products and services are endorsed, visit the Member Benefits section of the CTA website at [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org), or call the Member Benefits Department at (650) 552-5200.

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### Avoid Costly Mistakes When Purchasing Your Next Vehicle

The auto industry landscape has changed drastically over the past few years and the majority of dealerships are out to make the most money they can off your next vehicle purchase. Below are several auto loan mistakes that can cost you a lot of money.

1. **Negotiating monthly payment rather than the price of the vehicle** – if a dealer asks you how much money you can afford to spend monthly (i.e., your auto loan payment), don't answer—this is an often-used trap. This gives the dealer the upper hand and it can reduce your chances of negotiating a lower price for the vehicle.
2. **Allowing the dealer to tell you your creditworthiness** – before stepping foot on a dealership's lot, you should know your credit score (often referred to as your FICO score). Your credit score

determines the interest rate you'll receive on your auto loan. If a dealership determines that you don't know your score, they can mislead you—often costing you thousands of dollars over the course of the loan.

3. **Cash rebate vs. low interest rate at the dealer** – do your homework before deciding your best option; in most instances, you cannot take both offers. Both offers can sound enticing, but do the math to determine which nets the best cost-saving results over the life of the loan.

First Financial offers CTA members some of the lowest auto loan rates in the industry and an Auto Buying service that takes away the hassle of haggling. Call First Financial at (800) 537-8491 to see how we can take the burden from you.

*Article courtesy of First Financial Credit Union. This article is not intended to represent First Financial Credit Union's views or opinions, nor does it represent First Financial as an expert on the subject discussed. This article should be used for information purposes only.*



## **AEA Leadership 2010-2011**

### **President**

Robert Strickler

### **Vice President**

Linda Anderson, Marsh Elementary

### **Secretary**

Pennie Davis, Grant Elementary

### **Treasurer**

Steve Kish, Deer Valley High School

### **CTA State Council Representatives**

Denise James, Lone Tree Elementary

Valorie Luke, Prospects High School

Sara Savacool, Antioch High School

### **High Schools' Liaison**

J Myers, Deer Valley High School

### **Middle Schools' Liaison**

Linda Jones, Black Diamond Middle School

### **Elementary Schools' Liaison**

Karen Vargas, Marsh Elementary

### **Bargaining Team**

Dylan Howell – Chair, Antioch High School

Sharon Ball, Dallas Ranch Middle School

Jeri Creese, London Elementary

Kevin Jones, Antioch High School

Lenore Navarro, Kimball Elementary

Sharon Weaver, Turner Elementary

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### **AUSD School Board Members**

Diane Gibson-Gray, President

Claire Smith, Vice President

Gary Hack (member)

Joy Motts (member)

Walter Ruehlig (member)



# Put It On Your Calendar

## April 2011

- 17 Palm Sunday
- 18-25 Spring Break
- 19 Passover
- 22 Good Friday/Earth Day
- 24 Easter
- 27 Administrative Professionals Day



## May 2011

- 2 AEA Executive Board– AEA Office – 2730 Lone Tree Way – 3:45 PM
- 8 Mother’s Day
- 9 AEA Rep Council – AEA Office – 2730 Lone Tree Way – 3:45 PM
- 11 Day of Teacher – Skipolini’s Pizza – Antioch – 3:30 PM
- 14 WHO Award – HS Lordships – Berkeley – 11:00 AM
- 14 Retirement Dinner – Lone Tree Event Center – Antioch – 6:00 PM
- 16 Site Meetings
- 22-24 Executive Board Planning Conference – Lodi
- 30 Memorial Day – No School



## June 2011

- 3-5 CTA State Council – Los Angeles
- 9 Last Day of School
- 19 Father’s Day
- 21 Summer Begins

