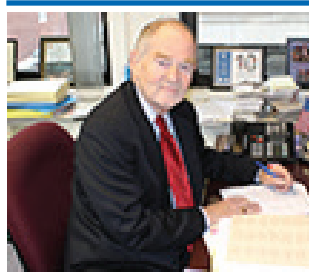


August/September 2017



THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Thomas J. Gosnell
 President, AFT Massachusetts

Challenges and Opportunities

During the next year and a half public education and public libraries will continue to confront many challenges. Of course, this is not anything new, but this time some of the challenges are more ominous. As believers in public education and public libraries, we have no choice but to meet the challenges head on. We need to be diligent, shrewd, and smart in opposing attacks upon us and in supporting opportunities that will enhance our beliefs.

Let's look at some of them.

SUPREME COURT CASE - JANUS

Unfortunately, some in this nation wish to destroy unions with a multi-pronged attack in a multitude of forums. For example, legislatures have eliminated or severely curtailed collective bargaining or tried to make it more difficult to collect union dues, thus hampering the ability of unions to fight for quality public education for all students regardless of their economic status and for public libraries which provide splendid opportunities for lifelong learning.

Courts have become another forum to attack unions. Currently a case - called "the Janus Case" (a.k.a., *Janus v. AFSCME*) - has been filed with the United States Supreme Court. Most observers believe that the Court will take the case and rule in favor of those bringing it.

To fully understand the case's dimension some history is in order. In the 1970's the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that it was permissible to levy union dues on non-union members because they received the benefits of what the union did, e.g., the negotiation of salary, benefits, and working conditions which benefited members and non-members alike.

Now there appears to be a majority on the U.S. Supreme Court who will rule that such a decision can no longer

be in effect and that non-union members in public sector unions cannot be required to pay dues even though they benefit from a negotiated contract.

Those who bring such cases wish to weaken, if not destroy, unions and the causes they espouse. Unions have long been vocal advocates for quality public education, adequate healthcare, and widespread public transportation among a host of other services essential for a functioning democracy. In addition, unions brought us the weekend.

TRUMP-DEVOS EDUCATION BUDGET

President Trump and Secretary of Education DeVos are proposing an education budget that takes nine billion dollars from public education.

One of their major proposals is to establish a voucher program. This program would permit the use of public funds to send students to private schools. In other words, taxpayers' money would now fund private schools. The program is a direct assault on public education, a bedrock of American democracy.

They also want to decimate Title II funding which provides funding for professional development and class size reduction.

Let me quote Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, our national union to which we all belong:

And how better to pave the way to privatize public education than to starve public schools to the breaking point, criticize their deficiencies and let the market handle the rest - all in the name of choice.... That's how a democracy comes apart.

The challenges are here and are coming, but opportunities are also presenting themselves.

FAIR SHARE TAX

The Massachusetts legislature has voted to put on the 2018 ballot a state constitutional amendment

which would increase revenue for public education and for the improvement of roads, bridges, and public transportation.

The amendment would place on those individuals whose earned income, not net worth, an additional 4% tax on the earned amount over \$1,000,000. Thus, an individual whose earned income is \$1,500,000 would pay an additional \$20,000, 4% on \$500,000.

A coalition of community groups, faith based groups, and labor unions is spearheading the effort. Just as we worked so diligently to defeat Question 2 in 2016, we must do the same to pass this constitutional amendment in 2018. Our schools are woefully underfunded.

MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

The more involved the membership, the stronger the union. Whether we wish to get more revenue, to beat back the assaults on public education, to negotiate salaries, benefits, and working conditions, to reduce class size, to strengthen public education and public libraries, to enable our students to be active participants in our democracy, to provide adequate health insurance, to maintain the retirement system, or to educate our students to their maximum potential a mobilized membership is essential.

During this upcoming school year the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts will be working with all our locals to determine ways in which we can maximize the talents of our members so that all of us can be more vigorous advocates for the values we cherish.

I wish everyone an enjoyable remainder of the summer and a happy Labor Day weekend. ■

If you have any questions or comments, email me at tgosnell@aftma.net.

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 from AFT MA and AFT
 and other special content,
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www.aftma.net**

Summer is a Time to Get Organized

BTU Institute shows members the way forward

As AFT MA continues to expand its efforts to organize and engage every member, many locals have taken up the challenge by working to find ways to reach and recruit each and every one of their members as well. From July 5-7, BTU took their turn by convening their latest Summer Organizing Institute.

"The BTU's Summer Organizing Institute is always a great way to recharge and repurpose our union organizing work," said AFT MA Director of Organization Brian LaPierre, who facilitated one of the many informative and interesting sessions. "It will better prepare us for the challenges that lie ahead."

While most of the participants were from BTU, there was strong representation from many other AFT MA locals.

"A big kudos and much gratitude to the BTU for opening their doors to other locals during...[the] Summer Organizing Institute," said Medway teacher and AFT MA Executive Board member Christine Moyer (please see June/July 2016 issue). "Within this short time frame, dedicated Boston teachers and other AFT members learned strategies for organizing and engaging members surrounding current issues in the political landscape for public education."

Noting that, for the first time ever, there will be a second Summer Organization Institute August 29-31 (for information, please visit www.btu.org/

summer), Moyer recommended the event to all her colleagues.

"Along with the information being invaluable and empowering," Moyer said, "it was fun, enlightening, and built connections between Boston teachers and other area teachers."

"It was incredible," echoed Lynn Teachers Union President and AFT MA Executive Board member Sheila O'Neil. "All presenters were extremely knowledgeable and we received pertinent information. The skills taught in the...workshop[s] will be utilized by members to increase involvement."

In addition to welcoming remarks from BTU President Jessica Tang and a presentation by LaPierre that presented specific strategies for combatting prevalent union-busting techniques, the Institute offered presentations by AFT MA Director of Educational Policy and Programs Dan Murphy, AFT MA Associate Counsel Harold Jones, and also by student and community leaders, including BTU Organizers Jonathan Rodrigues and Shanika Houlder. There was even a well-received offering from Amy Mizialko, Vice President of the Milwaukee Teachers Union.

"I was deeply honored to be invited to spend time with the BTU," Mizialko said. "I feel a deep responsibility to lend support whenever another union reaches out."

In her presentation, Mizialko explained how her union focused on three stages - Survive, Stabilize and Power Up - to overcome significant challenges to labor in Wisconsin.

"MTEA members have remained united, determined never to quit each other nor our students," she recalled. "This means membership is the job of every member, every day in every school.... We are dedicated to a bottom up, member led, democratic union focused on building power with members at school sites and power with students and community."

Mizialko also maintained that there is "reason to hope" and noted how students are "counting on us to remain steadfast in our commitment to them and our fellow members are counting on each other to birth the new union and win the public schools our students are entitled to."

Murphy also enjoyed delivering his presentation on the federal and state educational policy landscape and noted how "engaged" members were, especially when discussing the Commonwealth's school and district accountability system that, he says, has "enormous implications," especially for urban communities.

"Participants quickly came to see the shortcomings of the current test-rank-and-punish system, and how it is biased against schools serving large numbers of economically-disadvantaged students and English language learners," Murphy observed. "The takeaway was that it doesn't have to

be this way. Through member mobilization, we can work to create a fair, sensible system that is about support, not punishment."

Another key issue of the Institute was the possible changes to agency fee that are pending as the Supreme Court considers *Janus v. AFSCME* in their coming session. In his presentation on this topic, Jones revisited the history of the case, recalling the previous incarnation of the issue (i.e., *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, et. al.*) and how the decision was shaped to a great degree by the untimely demise of Justice Antonin Scalia.

"The Courts decided decades ago that no one can be compelled to be a member of a union," Jones explained, noting that the basis of this decision was the view that the First Amendment "prohibits the government from compelling a person to join an association that they don't want to be a member of and that they don't have to contribute to the political speech of the organization." As such, more and more organizations are being asked or forced to provide contractual protections and other services without those who benefit from it being asked or forced to contribute to the respective organizations.

Looking forward to *Janus*, Jones maintained that there is "no doubt of the outcome of this case," and noted that a decision may be handed down as early as March of 2018. If the Court rules against the unions (as it is expected to), Jones explained that agency fees will immediately become illegal. "This means that...members can quit and receive the benefits of the contract without paying a dime."

The question, therefore, becomes what we as proud unionists can do to preserve our organization and the rights and privileges it affords. Jones' answer involved using and insisting upon specific language in contracts and also making sure that our members are aware and appreciative of all the union does for them.

"The only answer to this challenge is member engagement," Jones concluded.

To encourage more engagement and involvement, the Institute also offered provocative and productive workshops that were led by representatives of BTU, AFT MA, and AFT. Among these were BTU Secondary Field Representative Caren Carew's workshop on how to appropriately handle grievances, a discussion of organizing and coaching techniques by Kennedy School Fellow Jeff Rousset, and a guide to effective use of using social media that was omnce again offered by Asher Huey,

an Assistant Director in AFT's Communications Department.

"It is a way for a lot of people to take action to make sure people in our group see the information that they want," Huey explained as he walked participants through such platforms as Facebook and Twitter, pointing out the similarities and differences between them. And while the various platforms can be easy to use, Huey also warned users to take care when preparing and sharing a message.

"Post as if your mom might see it," he advised.

"Assume it's public," echoed BTU member and AFT MA Executive Board member Michael Maguire, "and put your best foot forward!"

In his presentation, Rousset laid out five steps to effective coaching: First,

the person to be coached should be observed in order to establish a baseline of behavior. Second, the issues to be dealt with should be officially diagnosed. After appropriate preparation has been done, the intervention should take place. Next, there should be a debrief, during which the subject is explicitly asked what they plan to do differently going forward. Finally, a second observation can help establish the new baseline.

"Coaching is a way of building other people's problem-solving muscles," Rousset observed, "so you don't have to do everything."

In this way, he suggested, it can be an effective way of bringing people into a campaign and then allowing and encouraging them to recruit and coach others.

By the end of the third day, the walls of the BTU Hall were plastered with giant sticky notes, each of which was nearly overflowing with comments and ideas from the engaged participants.

"It's exciting to see the BTU Summer Organizing Institute grow every year," said Tang (who Huey called "brilliant" when he came upon one of her many social media posts), "and to expand the opportunities for our members to get the knowledge and skills they need to engage all of our members in our fight for a fair contract, for public education, and for our future." ■



LEADING THE CONVERSATION
BTU President Jessica Tang



LAYING DOWN THE LAW
AFT Counsel Harold Jones

The Advocate

The official publication of
AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO

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Turning Around the “Turnarounds”

Sen. Jehlen convenes important discussion at State House

On June 13, as the debate regarding increasing the minimum wage continued downstairs, public education champion Sen. Pat Jehlen (please see previous issue) convened a State House meeting of the Special Senate Subcommittee on Education to discuss issues related to so-called “turnaround” schools.

In a wide, bright and (most importantly) air-conditioned room decorated with locally-sourced art, students, educators, parents, and legislative and community leaders gathered in what Jehlen called “a rare opportunity to find out what happens in our communities.”

Jehlen began by explaining that the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) does not require the five “levels” of schools the Commonwealth has been using as an often punitive guideline. “ESSA does not require getting rid of the principals or asking the teachers to reapply,” Jehlen added, “and it certainly doesn’t include ignoring the concerns of local stakeholders.”

Speaking of stakeholders, though the majority of the audience was made up of educators and students, there were also representatives of AFT MA (including Director of Organization Brian LaPierre, Director of Education Policy Dan Murphy, and Legislative Field Representative Michael Canavan, and Field Representative Jeremy Shenk) and the legislature (including Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, Sen. Jamie Eldridge, Rep. Denise Provost, and Rep. Kevin Murphy).

By way of definition, Jehlen explained that Level 3 schools are among the lowest 20% in terms of performance (however that may be determined), but clarified that Level 4 and Level 5 are “chosen by the Commissioner at his discretion.” Jehlen also noted the relationship between these so-called “underperforming” schools and underprivileged communities.

“Today we are going to hear from the experts,” Jehlen said, introducing a panel that included students from Excel High School (which was declared a Level 4 only this past year), as well as teachers from Brighton High School (which suffered a similar fate) and a parent of a student who attended one of the many Boston public schools that has recently been closed.

Despite her experience in mathematics, Dearborn STEM Academy teacher Gina Sheehan could not fully explain how the levels are determined. As both raw scores and apparent growth are factored into the alleged algorithm, and as such potentially mitigating factors as English proficiency and economic status are apparently not taken into consideration, different students and different schools are apparently judged differently.

As a result, schools that may actually be improving may still be labeled as needing to be “turned around,” Sheehan said, adding that, “levels four and five are subcategories of level three [that] are picked by one man - the Commissioner - according to whatever measurements he has.”

With the situation defined as clearly and effectively as possible, Jehlen invited other experienced experts to

explain their experiences.

Brighton ESL/SEI teacher Martha Boisselle has 13 years of experience and, in addition to being awarded the Shattuck Award this year from the City of Boston, was a 2017 finalist for MA Teacher of the Year. Despite this experience and these accolades, she (like all of her colleagues at Brighton High) received a pink slip and was asked to reapply for her job.

In her statement, Boisselle thanked these same colleagues for allowing and encouraging her to stay in the field so long (especially in a day and age when so many other teachers – including her award-winning colleagues - leave the field after only a few years).

“I credit the teacher I am today with my colleagues at Brighton High,” she said, adding of the Shattuck she is “proud to accept the honor because it represents more than myself.”

Turning from herself to the plight of all “turnaround” school teachers and staff, Boisselle agreed that it is “extremely important to assess teachers,” but maintained that the methods that are being used “hurt the most vulnerable students.” And while she also agreed that MA should be looked to as a model of public education, she admitted that the process she was forced to undergo made even an experienced and acclaimed educator like herself “question my profession.”

Despite her frustrations and the pain she and so many others have had to endure, however, Boisselle ended on a cautiously optimistic note.

“I know some day we will get this right,” she predicted, “but that work must begin now!”

Boisselle was followed by Brighton colleague (and Advocate contributor) Kristen Leathers, who discussed how current policy targets vulnerable populations, including immigrants and students with special needs.

“The higher the needs,” she observed, “the lower the rank.”

Noting that Brighton High had a larger increase in ELL students (at over 200%) than any other school in Boston, Leathers decried the fact that these students were given “only one chance to demonstrate mastery” (i.e., the 10th grade MCAS).

“Research shows that it takes at least seven years to master English,” Leathers noted. “How can new immigrants possibly achieve these goals?”

With the teachers’ perspective firmly established, Excel High student Trinity Kelly spoke frankly and emotionally of her experiences with the changes involved with application of a “Level 4” label.

“The environment completely changed,” Kelly explained, emphasizing how the removal of the award-winning debate team that offered a safe and encouraging place to express and challenge ideas while learning how to communicate effectively (a skill that is apparently in decline across all grade levels) was especially painful.

“It inspired me...It made me want to go to school,” Kelly said. “The debate team gave me a voice and that has been destroyed!”

Ironically, Kelly noted, the team was dismembered to make room for the Level 4 discussion groups that now must be attended by all teachers.

Recalling the day the Level 4 label was applied, Kelly revealed that her teachers were given their pink slips at school so the school could “save money” by not mailing them.

As the other two schools that had once occupied the former South Boston High School building have since been removed, Kelly expressed fears that Excel will be next.

“Where will I go for college recommendations if my new teachers do not know me?” she asked.

Though he reasoned that he was a “beneficiary” of the mass firings that opened an opportunity for him to teach, Grew Elementary teacher Emmanuel Farley admitted that his school has not always been a bastion of opportunity. As a result, despite the fact that his kids are “amazing...and can tell you everything about the world,” Farley admitted that, thanks to the turnaround process, he is not sure how long he can sustain the kind of work that is necessary.

“We have 100 hours of additional professional development,” Farley explained. “After we teach, we have to meet for three more hours to talk about what we just did for the previous six.”

Referring to Boisselle and other colleagues, Farley added that, “to see colleagues who are winning awards being let go does not make me feel valued and does not make me confident about staying in this field.”

Echoing Kelly, Mattahunt parent Aneann Bridgemohan discussed the pain she has endured while watching her daughter’s school be closed down.

“I am a recent immigrant,” Bridgemohan explained. “The Mattahunt is full of recent immigrants. In my daughters class, 24 kids speak 32 different languages. That means that many kids have already learned two or more languages before they come to the Mattahunt.”

Unfortunately, the recent hiring of Teach for America participants (which is a hallmark of many “turnaround” processes) was not enough to bring the diverse classes together.

“They were unable to control the room,” Bridgemohan observed, noting how she would often take her daughter to her office instead of leaving her at the school.

As a working parent, Bridgemohan appreciated the wraparound services the Mattahunt offered starting at 7 AM.

“The school is connected to local community center,” she noted, mentioning the swim team that was integrated into the curriculum in order to help students who were visiting families in Haiti during vacations and

drowning because they never learned to swim.

Despite these benefits to the students and the community, however, the school that can hold 900 is being forced to evict its 620 students, many of whom, Bridgemohan suggested, literally have “nowhere to go.”

“The school has become a warehouse,” Bridgemohan suggested. “The kids are not taught but are still expected to pass the MCAS.”

Speaking of high-stakes tests, Bridgemohan noted that, whenever she visits the school (which, she says, is often), the building is “crawling” with testers.

“How much time is spent on testing,” she asked, “and not teaching the children?”

In addition to affecting the students, the excessive testing also hurts the teachers, as they do not have time to conference with each other or with parents.

“Parents do not know what reading level [their children] are at,” she observed, “and now the kids do not know where they are going. All they have known is the Mattahunt. And it is going away.”

Saddened by the past, Bridgemohan suggested a look to the future.

“We need to think about the future and what it means for our children and we need to think about it now,” she said. “It starts with us!”

After Southbridge Education Association President Dave Williams spoke about the tragedies that have befallen his district since being named a Level 5 and to be taken into receivership, Jehlen concluded by reminding the assembled that the purpose of the panel was to “listen to stories from people in the field, compare them with data... and to think if there are better ways to meet the need of students and to enhance our watching force.”

“Now that’s we have new opportunities under the new...law,” Jehlen queried, “can we provide better remedies that will not disrupt... but will support?”

“If DESE will listen to us and if policy makers will listen to us,” Murphy replied, “maybe we can!”

Noting that the new law insists that schools performing at the lowest level are to be given more support, Murphy went on to suggest that we also need to be sure that the language we use about our schools, students, and teachers is more supportive.

“We do not need...the punitive language and the blaming and shaming,” Murphy maintained. Instead, he suggested that we can “create a rational system that is...supportive and tailored to the needs of the schools.”

In order to do this, Murphy suggested that people not only speak to their legislators but go to their schools to find out what the “real root causes” of the alleged problems are.

“They are not the teachers themselves or union contracts,” he insisted, noting how AFT MA is “excited” to work with Jehlen and her colleagues to “find some common sense solutions.” ■



LEADING THE CONVERSATION
Rep. Pat Jehlen

Same Passion; New Role

Brian LaPierre takes over as Director of Organization

As our membership prepares to battle for the “millionaires’ tax” that will be on the ballot as a Constitutional Amendment in 2018 and to battle against the results of the forthcoming Supreme Court decision on *Janus v. AFSCME*, we need to be more organized and more active than we have ever been.

Fortunately, we have experienced field representative, political organizer, city councilor, and dedicated family man Brian LaPierre leading the charge as AFT MA’s newest Director of Organization.

When asked what inspired him to take on the role, LaPierre says it was not so much a what as a who.

“Whenever we discuss this position,” LaPierre maintains, “we have to mention the long-time service of past directors, Annemarie Dubois and her predecessor Joan (Buckley) Devlin, both of whom served this organization with distinction.”

As he is only the third Director of Organization since the organization’s days as MFT, LaPierre does not have a deep well of people from whom to draw inspiration, but says that Devlin and Dubois offer more than enough support and good ideas.

“I have admired both of them and look upon them as mentors and good trade unionists, who gave a lot to our organization,” LaPierre says.

When asked how it was decided that he would succeed Dubois, LaPierre recalls being asked about his interest by AFT MA President Tom Gosnell during the Save Our Public Schools campaign to defeat Question 2, the failed attempt to expand charter schools statewide.

“Apparently, Tom saw my ability to mobilize and organize to assist our locals in its defeat and grow our coalition into a movement,” LaPierre concluded. “I was informed that he wanted to appoint me to the position right after the November election.”

As he was already busy with his assignments in various locals, his political activism with AFT MA as well as his work in Lynn as a City Councilor, LaPierre says that he had to take some time to talk over the decision with his wife and children.

“My wife is an educator,” he says of Kelly, who teaches eighth grade at the Pickering Middle School in Lynn, and my boys are still young, but they understand the work I do and wanted me to continue to help teachers.”

With his background in education and organization, LaPierre has worked to expand upon his predecessor’s past work in ways that maintain the historical integrity of the organization while developing new ways to engage and support his fellow members.

“I see this as an opportunity to move the position to a total organizing structure,” LaPierre says, noting that he hopes to engage and energize everyone “from field staff to secretarial staff to even our newspaper editor so we can all work together to help our members see more value in the union

and the work we do while still providing them the many services we always have.”

In addition to his own new ideas, LaPierre expressed excitement about the many new leaders who have taken on new tasks and activities alongside him.



WELL-ORGANIZED FAMILY MAN

AFT MA Director of Organization Brian LaPierre with (from left) son Dylan, wife Kelly and son Owen

“There are a lot of new leaders being elected in our locals,” he says, mentioning such stellar supporters as Jessica Tang (Boston), Beth Kontos (Salem), Sheila O’Neill (Lynn), and Jennifer Salmon (Chelmsford). “They are all new union officers and are going through a baptism by fire, but we are doing all we can to make their transition easier and to support them as we support all our union leaders. It is an exciting time with ample opportunities to lead”

Since taking over the position, LaPierre has been working even more closely with local leaders and individual members in his continuing effort to encourage engagement, involvement, and participation.

“We want to have one-on-one conversations with each and every one of our 23,841 members,” LaPierre explains, “and have every member take on individual roles and try to grow our activist member percentage.”

As the organization prepares to face the fallout from the *Janus* case and the fight for the “millionaire’s” tax, LaPierre knows that AFT MA will need all hands on deck if we are to succeed and prosper, just as we have with every other past battle.

“I think we’d be foolish to not use this as an opportunity to talk to our members about how we can support them more effectively,” the upbeat unionist suggests, “and get them to support each other.”

While AFT MA members are his top priority, as the organization is so intimately involved with other groups (including MTA, Raise UP MA, MEJA, and others), LaPierre is keen to point out how the work we do and the example we set as an organization will have much larger repercussions.

“In addition to public schools,” he says, “we are working for affordable higher education, economic opportunities for everyone, affordable health care, and protesting against hatred and discrimination, not only in our schools but in our communities.”

As such, he maintains, AFT MA members not only have the oppor-

tunities to help each other and their organization but to have a larger and more profound impact on their student’s lives.

“Our members can engage not only in their workplaces but in their communities,” LaPierre observes, “and we want to support those initiatives.”

While he is doing all he can to support the organization as a whole, LaPierre maintains close ties with his members in Revere and Chelsea.

“I am the lead negotiator for Chelsea and also for the Revere paraprofessional local,” he explains, “so I am still servicing locals as well, just as Joan and Annemarie did. I have been balancing work with my districts with my work with the entire organization.”

While he admits that “there is not much time to spare,” LaPierre maintains his positive attitude and ex-

emplary work ethic to serve everyone he can as effectively as he can.

“I can also call on my colleagues,” he says thankfully, “who have all been very supportive and who continue to do great work in our locals. They work hard and put in long hours and it is helping make our members and locals stronger and more successful and develop into real sustainable organizations.”

Benefit Bulletin: TRUE Car Savings

AFT member Lucy Reyes estimates she has purchased seven or eight vehicles in her lifetime. Undoubtedly, she says, her most recent auto-buying experience was the easiest.

Reyes, who is a school worker, took advantage of the AFT+ Auto Buying Service when she purchased a new vehicle. She wishes she had used the service for previous purchases.

“It would have saved a lot of time and hassle,” Reyes said.

The AFT+ Auto Buying Service helps union members find the right new or used car or truck, saving an average of \$3,279 off MSRP through TRUECar.

“I did some research and was able to look at different cars and compare,” said Reyes, who learned of the AFT+ Auto Buying Service through her union newsletter. “It was easy.”

All members need to do is select the desired new or used vehicle and options, view upfront pricing, and compare them with what others pay for the same vehicle through the TRUECar Price Curve. The system then provides the names of up to three local dealers, along with a savings certificate. The member then chooses one of the dealers and present the certificate to a representative for a

hassle-free car buying experience. While he is still eager to maintain AFT MA’s reputation for dealing with challenges quickly and effectively, LaPierre suggests that the time is right to go further.

“We’ve always been an organization that picks up the phone quickly and is able to put fires out,” he maintains, “but now we are trying to position ourselves as more than just be a representative. We want to train and engage union members in ways to give teachers and support staff the tools they need to be successful.”

As the member engagement plan continues to evolve, LaPierre expresses excitement about seeing how it progresses and how it also can develop members into activists.

“I am really looking forward to seeing how our member engagement plan is received,” he says, “and what we can do to support the locals’ efforts in maintaining the integrity of our profession while doing the work we need to do to maintain our strong membership.”

In order to achieve this goal, LaPierre believes that every member needs to be actively involved in this process.

“It is an opportunity to move forward,” he suggests, “and to establish a forward-thinking agenda and to lead with the foresight we have had in our locals and to repurpose what we do well to serve everybody from an organizing perspective that will lead us to grow our membership.” ■

hassle-free car buying experience.

“I liked that I didn’t have to drive around looking at all these cars, ask

what the price was, and what the features were,” Reyes said. “It was all included in the package. You could do it all online. It was nice and convenient.”

Reyes received a \$100 rebate with her automobile purchase due to the fact that she purchased a union-made vehicle. Additional \$200 rebates are available with the purchase of an EPA Green Car.

This is not the first time Reyes has taken advantage of benefits available through AFT+.

“They have a lot of good benefits,” she said. “I’ve bought tickets from Disneyland, Six Flags, and different theme parks. I love that the union offers all these different benefits.” ■

For information about all the AFT+ programs, visit aft.org/benefits and select the “shopping” link.



A “TRUE” CONSUMER
AFT member Lucy Reyes

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“Right to Work is Wrong”

An EXCLUSIVE guest column from Steve Tolman

Research shows that when working people decide to stand together in a union, we win better wages, better health care for our families, and better retirement protection. But all that is in jeopardy now. Corporate lobbyists and the right wing in Washington are joining forces to deprive workers of the only chance we have to stand together to level the playing field.



ALWAYS BY OUR SIDE
MA AFL-CIO President Steve Tolman (right) with AFT MA Director of Organization Brian LaPierre

Right to Work isn't about rights at all! It has nothing to do with the basic rights that every working person deserves, such as the right to a good job with a good wage and the ability to retire in dignity. The right to affordable health care so that working families are not

one illness away from bankruptcy. The right to a voice at work and a voice in our institutions of government.

Right to Work is wrong. It's an all-out assault to eradicate unions and our ability to protect working people. It's an attack that disguises itself in many forms such as laws, privatization

and stripping collective bargaining rights. For teachers, it's charter schools and now it's a comprehensive attack on all public sector workers through the Supreme Court case, *Janus v. AFSCME*.

Under so-called Right to Work laws

poverty levels rise, health and safety suffers, and it's harder for every working person, union or non-union to make ends meet. The Massachusetts AFL-CIO has therefore made a commitment to work with all public sector unions to be ready for any decision from the Supreme Court.

Getting ready means asking every teacher to renew your commitment to the union. It also means building the strongest unions we've ever had. That's going to take planning, that's going to take hundreds of new member leaders, and that's going to take old-fashioned workplace organizing.

We must be organizing all the time – internal and external. That is why the Massachusetts AFL-CIO has formed the Public Sector Task Force. Through the task force we are providing a series of trainings to unions. Many AFT staff and leaders attended the session we hosted July 20th, bringing all public sector unions together to share best practices, coordinate resources, develop a unified voice and support each other in building a strong Massachusetts labor

movement.

I had the opportunity to hear your national president, Randi Weingarten, just a few days ago and she said something that really inspired me to action: “Those who have rigged the economic system, who have rigged the political system against working people are now going after the only voice we have left, our unions.” President Weingarten is correct – we cannot sit idly by while the corporate billionaires and CEOs call the shots. We have the freedom to join together and that's the best way to make our voices heard. ■

At the banquet table of nature there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take and you keep what you can hold. If you can't hold anything, you won't keep anything. And you can't take anything without organization.

– A Philip Randolph

Coming Together to Go Forward

Unions unite at AFL-CIO event to prepare for the future

As AFT MA continues to develop new ways to engage members and encourage them to participate, our brothers and sisters across the labor landscape are looking both at strengthening their own organizations and also at what we can all do together.

On July 20, representatives from AFT MA, MTA, AFSCME, SEIU, UAW, Steelworkers, Mass. Nurses and other unions gathered in a packed room at MTA's office building in Quincy for a special meeting that was hosted by the MA AFL-CIO. At the meeting, labor representatives shared concerns and ideas related to how unions engage members and how members participate.

In the coming session, the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear *Janus v. AFSCME*. If the decision goes as it is expected to, right to work will be established in the public sector and union members will be allowed to be such without paying full dues. The ramifications are frightening, but not inevitable.

Using the 2014 case of *Harris v. Quinn* as an example, representatives from MA AFL-CIO and SEIU chapters across the country offered reflective and forward-thinking advice about how to handle such challenges and how to deal with the possible changes that may lie ahead.

“We have a lot to learn from those who have come before us in order to prepare for what's ahead,” observed MA AFL-CIO Chief of Staff Lisa Gallatin, speaking on behalf of President Steve Tolman. “The MA AFL-CIO understands that unions need to be proactive and strategic and under President Tolman's leadership is devoting substantial resources to helping locals get prepared.” In addition to being MA AFL-CIO's Executive VP for the Public Sector, Jay Colbert is also

a district leader for the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). In this capacity, Colbert urged every union member to be involved and to keep an eye out for their brothers and sisters.

“To get out ahead of this thing,” he advised, “the big challenge is to educate people... People respond better when they know their union leaders...and what the union does for them.”

Enid Eckstein, coordinator of the newly-formed Public Sector Task Force that was created by Tolman explained that the goal of the Task Force is to “ensure that MA AFL-CIO does everything it can to unite and assist both public and private sector trade unionists.”

Eckstein is available to individual locals to help develop plans for their own member organizing and sign-up program.

Eckstein cited AFT MA President Tom Gosnell's observation that the current situation was “like having a thundercloud over your head,” but maintained that we can get through the storm as long as we work together.

The rest of the meeting was conducted by SEIU Home Care Council Representative Justin Foley, VP of

SEIU MA's Home Care Division Rebecca Gutman, and Shaine Truscott, Field Director for SEIU in Seattle.

After pointing out how *Janus* is “analogous” to *Harris*, Foley warned



MAKING A POINT
Flanked by Field Representative Jeremy Shenk (left) and Special Assistant to the President Ed Doherty (right), AFT MA President Tom Gosnell raises an issue at the recent Labor summit

that, if *Janus* goes as expected, “there is no private sector representative who will not try to take their security off the table too.”

Foley then walked the assembled through

the scenario that faced his union before *Harris* and the steps they took to make their union stronger.

“We prepared a checklist of relevant tasks,” Foley explained, the “core” of which he said involved unifying our voice both internally and externally. His colleagues ran through hypothetical situations and thought exercises, trying to figure out every possible scenario so they could be prepared.

“Because we did this work,” Foley maintained, “our locals are more resilient and, in some cases, financially stronger after *Harris*. So I want you to feel that this can be done!”

Gutman echoed Foley by discussing how her local was also able to increase membership and grow stronger despite the challenges it faced.

“Take a real honest look at where you are,” she urged, “and figure out where you need to go from there.”

Suggesting that the meeting was an example of “solidarity in action,” Truscott explained how setting specific goals was an important step in growth and engagement.

“We need...to cultivate a leadership structure,” she said, describing an ambitious campaign that involved knocking on 45,000 doors over the course of six months.

“Because of the amount of turf we had to cover,” Truscott explained, “we had to have several teams that were localized.” And though her colleagues were admittedly “not used to” such regimented assignments, they quickly became “incredibly invested.”

Gutman also suggested that campaigns can be great opportunities to develop new leaders and emphasized the importance of orientation as an opportunity for education and engagement.

“If our union is to continue to be powerful,” she emphasized, “every member need[s] to engage.”

Commenting on the presentation, Gosnell noted how over 95 percent of AFT MA's potential members are signed up and suggested that the challenge will be keeping them after the decision.

“No nine judges are going to define the relationship workers have with their unions,” Foley responded. “That can't be the conversation. It needs to be about taking power.” ■

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Meet Your Colleague: Debbie Lafond

While many have seen fit to “try on” teaching as a career, the truly great educators see their chosen profession as a calling.

Southeast Regional Vocational-Technical High School English teacher Debbie Lafond is one such educator. Her “calling,” however, came through potentially odd and surprising circumstances.

“When I was in second grade Lafond recalls, “my teacher would often swear at her students in a foreign language.”

Eager to stand up for herself and her fellow students, Lafond often found herself in the principal’s office to once again hear an explanation about the different roles of teachers and students.

“I thought kids deserve better than this [and] I can do better than this,” Lafond explains, noting the moment when she decided to become a teacher.

Despite her early calling, Lafond has been able to maintain a consistent philosophy through decades of academic involvement.

“I teach to give others a voice,” she says, “to empower my students with skills, confidence, and options; to plant seeds of thought that may sprout years from now; to infect others with a love of language and reading; and to be a positive adult role-model.”

As education was Lafond’s “way out” of a difficult childhood, she also strives to support other students in need and to show all students that “they can determine their own paths.”

After graduating from Rhode Island College with a BA in English Secondary Education Curriculum, Lafond served as a substitute teacher in various RI districts. When even she became “disillusioned” with the “unstable” nature of the substituting, Lafond took a step back and dedicated her skills and desire to serve to coordinating a community service grant

program.

“In that role,” she recalls, “I learned public relations and lobbying skills, graphic arts, collation building, and community activism.”



ANSWERING THE “CALL”
Debbie Lafond

With her continuous-building list of accomplishments and aptitudes, Lafond was not only able to use her time outside the classroom to assist parent support groups and coordinate a Child Abuse Prevention Month program in RI, she was also able to become even better prepared to teach when she returned.

In 2000, Lafond began teaching English at Southeast Regional.

One of the special elements the school is how it offers what Lafond cites as “three educations.” In addition to academic and vocational training, her students also develop social skills that are vital to succeed after graduation.

“They learn how to interact and depend upon others who often come from very different backgrounds,” she observes.

Speaking of different background, Lafond notes how the student body at Southeast Regional varies so widely, both in terms of socio-economic background as well as in terms of cultural roots.

“I fell in love with the wonderful variety of students who choose to come here,” she recalls, Lafond also loves the many languages that are spoken at the school and how she is able to learn as she teaches.

“My students make me laugh more often than cry,” she says, hinting at the many challenges all teachers face, but comparing it favorably with the benefits of her calling. “I want to give them my best!”

In order to be able to achieve this part of her calling, Lafond left New England for three summers in order to garner her MA in at Fort Hays State University in KS. When asked why

she was willing to give up her precious vacation time, Lafond quickly replies, “so I wouldn’t miss my time with...my students,” who, she assures, “are still the reason I continue to teach.”

While at Southeast Regional, Lafond has also worked with a national non-profit organization that supports post-secondary undergraduate education and philanthropy. “The years I served on this board taught me the importance of good communication, delegation, support, and activism,” says the CEO, Field Representative, and National Advisor. “This experience also enabled me to instill the importance of being prepared for college and career to my high school students.”

During the course of her nearly 20 years at Southeast Regional, Lafond has seen myriad changes in policy, schedules, and demands on herself, her colleagues, and her students.

“I’ve seen countless colleagues and students come and go,” she says. “The cycle of change continues through each season and year.”

Throughout it all, her dedication to her colleagues and students has remained. In recent years, it even pushed her to become more engaged (as she recommends others do) by becoming more involved in union life. While her first interaction with AFT MA was “strictly as a dues-paying member,” Lafond soon began attending meetings and asking questions.

“It was all I had the time and energy for as I focused on trying to establish myself as a teacher,” she says, empathetic for her colleagues’ overwhelming schedules and demands.

When come of the vocational teachers began to see the potential in Lafond and “take me under their wing,” as she puts it, Lafond was able to turn her own questions into answers for others.

“It was incredibly helpful to have experienced teachers answer my questions and give me advice,” she recalls, noting how many of her mentors were actively involve din AFT MA matters.

Inspired by her colleagues, Lafond and recalls not only commenting on but living through many communal divisions. One of the most divisive issues involved a proposed charter school.

“There are two written forms of Chinese,” Chan explains, “and many more spoken dialects of Chinese. We feared that the charter school would favor only certain ethnic groups.”



COMMUNITY CHAMPION
Rep. Tackey Chan

While the crowd that gathered at the public hearings supported a variety of views, it was clear that people were united in their desire for a good education for their children.

“In many communities,” Chan observes, “access to good education is a sign that the American Dream has been achieved. I watched how this one issue united a community to rally against something that would have ultimately divided them.”

With Chan’s help, his childhood school has been reopened and is now “more vibrant.” In fact, Chan notes,

fond began to volunteer in the social committee and eventually helped plan several meetings. Soon, she was leading the membership committee and producing materials and events to welcome and engage new members. After that, she moved to the negotiations and grievance committee. Throughout it all, Lafond continued to be noticed by her colleagues and continued to enjoy the added benefits that came from additional involvement, so when former local President Joe Poli asked her to run for the position of AFT delegate, she happily agreed.

“I wanted to give back to my local,” Lafond explains, noting how attending her first AFT MA convention in 2016 inspired her to become even more active and engaged, to the point that she was eventually able to complete Poli’s term when he was called to another role and then to be nominated and elected to a seat on the Executive Board herself.

“I’ve been honored to work with so many experienced and kind colleagues from across our state,” the voracious reader, occasional volleyball referee, and admittedly “bad” karaoke performer says, offering special thanks to Poli.

And while she feels confident that she has “more to offer,” Lafond is also aware that she always has “more to learn.”

Among the issues Lafond encourages all members to engage and support are what she sees as a rise in anti-intellectualism and high-stakes testing that does nothing to advance actual learning, a fall in funding and cultural competency and critical thinking, and a general lack of understanding, sympathy, and respect for the calling that is teaching

“Despite these many challenges,” Lafond confirms, “our strength comes from our members and the incredible work we do every day. We can make meaningful strides in righting these wrongs if we are united, active, and vocal.” ■

This is the eighth in a series of pieces intended to introduce AFT MA members to Executive Board members.

his own nephew is now a student. “We have a great school system,” he says proudly, noting how, unlike when he was a child, there are now new schools being built, instead of more being closed.

“Our schools are the foundations of our communities,” Chan says, “and they are essential to creating accepting environments for our future generations.” ■

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Legislator Profile: Rep. Tackey Chan

As a child of an immigrant family, education was always a priority for Rep. Tackey Chan. In fact, Chan recalls his parents buying a home near an elementary school with a strong reputation just so he and his brother could walk there every morning.

“Being different from the other kids in my neighborhood,” Chan reasons, “school became an opportunity to socialize and integrate into the community.”

Sadly, the school was soon closed due to funding issues related to Proposition 2 1/2.

“We watched as schools across the community closed and were sold off to private developers around the city,” Chan recalls.

In addition to changing his daily routine, Chan says that the closing of the school changed the entire community as well.

“I observed no new families moving

into the neighborhood,” he says, “and fewer and fewer children trick-or-treating every year during Halloween. I realized at a young age how a neighborhood school is the foundation of a neighborhood.”

Chan is keen to add that the school closing also changed his parents’ opinion on their community’s dedication to public education.

While Chan was eventually able to attend and graduate from both Boston College High School and Brandeis University, he knows that he is part of a very fortunate and very small minority.

As such, he has dedicated his life to helping other minorities. As a community activist for the Asian community, Chan learned to be “civically engaged”

Having Cake and Eating it Too

Paraprofessional Perspective
By Marcy Winer

Boosting morale is imperative in the workplace if employees are to work happily and productively. Nobody wants to work in a gloomy atmosphere without fun and enjoyment.

Often, we get so stuck in the rut of our daily cycle of “going through the motions” that we don’t see how our stagnant behavior and actions can harm us. Three years ago, I transferred to a smaller school. As it involved leaving coworkers who had become close friends and children I saw grow and change each year, I knew that taking that step was going to be very hard to do, but I needed to shake things up. When I first walked into my new school, I could not help but notice how it felt more like a home than a typical school. As the new school year began, I felt blessed to have made such a great decision! I was energized and full of hope and ready to bring my “A” game to my new school.

We celebrate lots of fun events at my school and we are always made to feel appreciated and valued. There always seems to be cake around! If we have group birthdays, we eat cake. If someone has an award or recognition, we eat cake. When coworkers get married or have babies, we definitely eat cake! It is a lovely way to gather the staff together for a few minutes and celebrate the event. It definitely bonds us and makes us feel like a family.

During the year, we also plan fun activities and social events outside of school to keep everyone excited and engaged while in school. The feeling is always warm, fun, and friendly. We genuinely enjoy each others company! That type of atmosphere makes employees do more and work harder. And the best part is that it takes so little to make such a great

positive change!

An article written by Sharissa Sebastian published in the May, 2017 issue of Forbes touched on many points related to seeking happiness in the workplace. The article maintained that each of us is responsible for creating our own happiness and that such positivity will not happen unless each of us takes steps to make it happen. Try some easy team building activities. Get out of your work “habitat” and go have some fun! Coworkers who are empathetic and see you need help with a project or counsel on an issue are lifelines. Repay their many favors and help them in return.

Your support system at work can make you or break you. Hopefully, you can find many who nurture and support. Such people truly make you feel like part of a team and make the work



TEACHING WITH JOY
Marcy Winer

atmosphere better for everyone. After all, you are all in this together!

Once I transferred to my new school, I set out to create a happy space for myself in my class. One of the first things I did was decorate my work space. I put a floral desk skirt on my table, added some pretty pencil boxes, and set up a space I would want to go to every morning for 180 days. Internal happiness leads to an external glow (and vice versa) and it can spread easily. When you are happy in your worklife, you will not only put more energy into your work but also put a spring in your step. You become more positive and productive and react more appropriately and effectively when challenging situations arise. You may even whistle while you work!

With these positive things in mind, I wish you all a wonderful and positive start to the school year. ■

Marcy Winer is a paraprofessional in Lowell and the founder of the literacy program Project DEAR (www.facebook.com/Project-DEAR-738334756244926).

Designing Fellow Wentworth professor wins MacDowell Award

Though he has only been teaching at Wentworth since 2016, Antonio Furgieue has already

made his name by being one of the 69 winners of the 2017 MacDowell Fellowship (www.macdowellcolony.org).

“I have been working on architectural camouflage,” Furgieue explains, describing the practice that rose to prominence in World War II wherein buildings were ostensibly made invisible to protect them. As he is both an architect

and a historian, Furgieue is intrigued by the movement and wants to bring the cloaking practice into the open.

“I think it is an increasingly important field in today’s world because of issues of privacy,” he suggests, noting that he hopes to take his work from the Fellowship and turn it into a book and exhibition.

The Fellowship was created in 1896 by composer Edward MacDowell and pianist Marian MacDowell at their farm in Peterborough, NH. As the bucolic setting was so conducive to their work and health, they decided to share their natural bounty by inviting other artists to join them. Over the past century, over 6,000 artists have participated, including the legendary likes of James Baldwin, Leonard Bernstein, Michael Chabon, Aaron Copland, Spalding Gray, Meredith Monk, Alice Walker, and Thornton Wilder.

“Fellows are selected by our admissions panels...of distinguished professionals in each artistic discipline,” explains Admission Director Courtney Bethel, noting that “the sole criterion for acceptance is artistic excellence.”

The MacDowell Fellowship grants its recipients the opportunity to spend time working on the project of their choice in a supportive community of like-minded and equally talented peers.

“You get your own cabin and can work throughout the day with no Internet or other interruptions,”

Furgieue explains. “In the evenings, everyone comes together at dinner...to share work.... It is a unique opportunity to sit around with other sharp minds from different disciplines.”

This year’s summer class includes artists, filmmakers, musicians, poets, and others from 16 states and six foreign nations - including Israel, Portugal, and South Korea. And while he is excited to en-

gage with all of them, Furgieue is also happy to be back with his friends and colleagues in Boston and especially at Wentworth.

“Wentworth is an amazing place,” he maintains, observing how the

school strives to engage people who apply knowledge and want to have an impact on their communities. “Also, the Boston area has a strong architecture community and I am close to many of the people here, so it was great to be able to come back!”

Before coming to Wentworth, Furgieue (who serves as an Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture, as well as a Design Studio Coordinator) instructed and engaged students at the University of Wisconsin, The Pratt Institute, Parsons School of Design, Columbia University, and the City College of New York.

“The Department of Architecture is pleased and honored to have Antonio as a valued faculty member,” said Interim Department Head Sharon Carter Matthews, particularly applauding the work Furgieue has done in the field of camouflage design. “His research is an inspiration to everyone.” ■



INTO THE WOODS
Antonio Furgieue



BREAKING NEW GROUND

At the groundbreaking for Wentworth’s first new academic building in over 40 years, participants included Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Wentworth President Zorica Pantić (center) flanked by Wentworth Board of Trustees members (from left) Ryan Hutchins, John Pini, Lawrence LaFreniere, Gregory Janey, Douglas Karam, and Stephen Fusi.

BOLD PRINT

Wentworth Institute of Technology was recently ranked as the nation’s top college offering degrees in construction management by College Factual. (www.CollegeFactual.com)

For the full list, please see <https://www.collegefactual.com/majors/business-management-marketing-sales/construction-management/rankings/top-ranked/>.

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Bilingualism and Communication: The Facts

Educator Opinion
By Miriam Fusco

Though Speech, Language, and Hearing Month (which is officially May) may have come and gone, there are still many important things to know and keep in mind when dealing with these vital issues.

For almost two decades, I have served a multicultural and multilingual community and have grown accustomed to hearing comments and questions about bilingualism from students, parents, and teachers. Some suggest that the bilingual child is just “confused.” Others ask if the delay due to the two languages; some even going so far as to insist that we should only teach and use English in the classroom.

My response is always the same: 1. Countless children all over the world learn more than one language and do not have communication delays. 2. Even children with learning disabilities can be successful bilingual communicators. 3. Research has proven that dual-language learning does not cause confusion and/or language delays. 4. There are advantages to bilingualism for students with or without delays.

Facts About Bilingualism

The world has become increasingly multilingual. For example, 11.9% of the Canadian population speaks a language other than English or French at home. In the U.S., 21% of school-age children speak a language other than English at home. Worldwide, it is estimated that there are more second-language speakers than native speakers and there are just as many bilingual children as there are monolingual children. These trends mean that many

families are needing or choosing to be bilingual, which could be due to the many benefits of bilingualism.

Benefits of Bilingualism

Bilingual children are better able to focus on relevant information and ignore distractions. They have shown to be more creative and better at planning and solving complex problems than monolinguals. The effects of aging on the brain are diminished



TWICE AS NICE
Miriam Fusco

among bilingual adults by as much four years in comparison to monolinguals with dementia. Bilingual individuals have greater access to people and resources. Around the world, employment rates are higher for bilinguals than monolinguals. Canadians who speak both official languages have a median income nearly 10% higher than that of those who speak

English only, and 40% higher than that of those who speak French only. The cognitive advantages of bilingualism (e.g. with attention, problem solving, etc.) seem to be related to an individual’s proficiency in his languages. This means that a person will benefit more from his bilingualism (cognitively), if he is more proficient in the languages spoken.

Language and Learning

Bilingualism does not cause language delay. While a bilingual child’s vocabulary in each individual language may be smaller than average, his total vocabulary (from both languages) will be at least the same size as that of a monolingual child. Bilingual children may say their first words slightly later than monolingual children, but still within the normal age range (i.e., between

8-15 months). When bilingual children begin to produce short sentences, they develop grammar along the same patterns and timelines as monolingual children. Therefore, a bilingual child who is demonstrating significant delays in language milestones could have a language disorder and should be assessed by a speech language pathologist.

When children mix their languages, it does not mean that they are confused or having trouble becoming bilingual. When children use both languages within the same sentence or conversation, it is known as “code mixing” or “code switching.” Examples of English-Spanish code-mixing include saying “big *muchacho*” (“big boy”) or “I want *mi comida* now” (“I want my food now”). Parents sometimes worry that this mixing is a sign of language delay or confusion, but it is a natural part of bilingualism. I sometimes still code mix when speaking with my mother in Spanish and English or my neighbor in French and English, even though I was born and raised in the U.S. and learned French in Europe. So, it should be expected that bilingual children will code mix as well when speaking with their same-aged bilingual peers.

A person does not have to be equally proficient in both languages to be considered truly bilingual. It is rare to find an individual who is equally proficient in both languages. Most bilinguals have a “dominant language” (i.e., a language of greater proficiency or comfort). The dominant language is often influenced by the majority language of the society in which the individual lives. An individual’s dominant language can change with age, circumstance, education, social network, employment, and many other factors.

Bilingual people do not have to stop speaking the home language. Some parents attempt to speak the majority language to their child because they want their child to learn that language,

even if they themselves are not fluent in the majority language. This can mean that conversations and interactions do not feel natural or comfortable between parent and child. There is no evidence that frequent use of the second language in the home is essential for a child to learn a second language. Furthermore, without knowledge of a family’s home language, a child can become isolated from family members who only speak the home language. Research shows that children who have a strong foundation in their home language can learn a second language more easily. Children are also at great risk of losing their home language if it is not supported routinely at home. Thanks to my mother, I learned to speak, read, and write Spanish at home, while learning to speak, read, and write English and French at school. This was one the best gifts my parents ever gave me.

Supporting a Bilingual Child

There are many ways to support a child’s bilingualism: The child’s family should do what feels comfortable for them. The family should not speak a language with which they are not comfortable. Do not worry if a child mixes two languages. This is a normal part of becoming bilingual. Provide the child with many opportunities to hear and speak the target language. When a language delay is suspected, consult a speech language pathologist for advice regarding the best ways to help the child learn more than one language. ■

Miriam Fusco, M.S. CCC-SLP, is an 18-year bilingual speech/language pathologist in the Lynn Public Schools.

(NOTE: For helpful research on this topic, please see this story on our website, www.aftma.net.)

Two A’s: Assessment and Active Learning

Educator Opinion
By Ronda Goodale

The current view in many school systems is that students are tested too much and that preparation and administration time takes away valuable learning time. Even so, there is a plethora of research on testing that indicates that tests can have a positive impact on both the retention of concepts as well as deeper learning.

When students know they are being tested, they often pay more attention to whatever they are learning. This increased attention requires students to read carefully, prioritize information, and often employ self-testing strategies. Doing well on tests often translates into becoming an effective learner. Tests can push students to retrieve information through an active learning process. Even multiple-choice tests offer the correct answer in the context of incorrect alternatives.

While tests can apparently be of benefit, the major issue that remains is the range of tests that students experience in school as well as the feedback they receive from tests. This is especially important for students with

disabilities and students who consider themselves to be poor test takers. Although research points to the benefits of testing, there are many reservations raised by teachers, especially concerning the time taken away from teaching while preparing students for assessments (especially standardized assessments that often have little to do with the classroom curriculum). Research favors strongly the positive impact on learning of formative tests that push students to retrieve learned material. They can also encourage students to retrieve and organize material for later retrieval. Research further demonstrates that more frequent short tests are far more effective than larger tests that encourage cramming where long-term retention is weak. If a teacher asks a question or gives a quiz at the end of a lecture, activity, or assigned reading, the answers can be discussed and students can become aware of gaps in their understanding. Such tests can be positive learning experiences. If tests are followed up by students planning a different approach to studying, the potential for growth can be further strengthened. In this way tests become a teaching tool.

Summative assessments (e.g., standardized assessments), however, assess developed knowledge or abilities. They do not provide for teacher input or necessarily shape future learning. Though they may provide some meaningful comparison data, standardized tests have very little to do with supporting learning.

Active learning is the most powerful approach in learning. In an interactive model where peers become teachers, they need to explain their ideas to others and provide support for their views. As they play with and discuss the concepts, they move information from short- to long-term memory and become an integral part of the problem-solving process. The active learner is involved in reading, writing, discussing, and problem solving, as well as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The question that remains, therefore, is how to infuse meaningful formative assessments into a classroom that incorporates an active learning



STRAIGHT “A”s
Ronda Goodale

approach. How can we support the use of formative assessments and use as few standardized assessments as possible in the classroom? Many types of tests can promote the retrieval process and have a positive impact upon learning. The essential component of transferring knowledge and problem solving can best be realized in a classroom where active learning is the major pedagogical approach. The more the teacher facilitates by setting up opportunities for peer instruction, discovery and problem-solving, the more deep learning will occur.

Assessments can be a strong classroom ally in an active learning environment. Even so, standardized tests should be kept to the minimum. ■

Ronda Goodale teaches Spanish at Boston Latin Academy, where she also serves as the faculty advisor to the Student Government and the Gay/Straight Alliance, and organizes with Boston’s Teacher Activist Group.

Commit to be Fit: Keeping Costs (and Weight) Down and Energy Up in Amesbury

While recess and physical education classes continue to fall prey to high-stakes testing and other time-takers, educators in Amesbury have been finding innovative ways to maintain their health and support their students' well-being. They are being recognized for their efforts by the MA Department of Public Health's Working on Wellness program (www.mawow.org) by being invited to participate in a panel of Fitness Champions at the organization's annual conference.

According to Senior Project Associate Kevin Myers, Working On Wellness provides up to \$10,000 in seed funding, online training and wellness advisors to MA organizations who are looking to develop fun and effective wellness initiatives unique to their workplace.

"The City of Amesbury's comprehensive wellness program was recommended to be a panelist," Myers explains, "because of Amesbury's commitment to their employees and their successful completion of the Working on Wellness program."

Among Amesbury's awesome athletes who spearheaded the program was AFT Amesbury President Cindy Yetman, who will be going to Gillette Stadium on September 19 to participate in the 10th annual The Worksite

Wellness Council of MA (www.wwc-ma.org) conference. At the conference, Yetman will participate alongside

executives from Nike and other Fortune 500 companies in a panel discussion on the use of incentives to increase participation in employee wellness activities.

"One of the programs we offered was a local Weight Watchers at Work program," Yetman explains, noting that employees were incentivized to participate by having their out-of-pocket fees reimbursed.

"My presentation will [also] include our success in launching a subsidized CSA Farm Share program with Cider Hill Farms in Amesbury," Yetman adds. Citing the "Amesbury treasure" that has provided fresh food to her

colleagues and community for so many years.

Though she has been a part of the city's grant awards for wellness in the past eight years, when asked what incentivizes her to do so much for so many others Yetman says, "I do all this so that I can help our employees in the city remain productive

and happy," and also hope that with our efforts we are able to stabilize our health care benefits costs for the city and its employees"

In addition to being recognized by the MA Department of Public Health, Yetman and her colleagues were also feted by Amesbury Mayor, Ken Gray.

"[He] frequently points to our work with wellness as one of the factors that control these costs for the city and its

employees," Yetman notes proudly.

As the national average annual increase in health care premiums is in the double digits over the past eight years, Yetman and her union brothers and sisters have been involved in planning wellness programming for our members that have seen their increases hover in the single digits.

"Although direct correlation can not be drawn with our activities and this stability," Yetman reasons, "I do think it is having a positive effect!"

While the health-related programs continue to grow and develop in Amesbury, Yetman is particularly proud of the successes realized by the Weight Watchers at work program she and her colleagues offered this year.

"I'm happy to report these employees have a weight loss total of 179 pounds at the conclusion of the 12 week program hosted in our own city hall auditorium." Yetman said, "Being at the final class where this result was revealed was very rewarding!"

Yetman says, "We have more work to do and will continue to plan wellness and nutrition programming next year for our city employees. Our local unions and city departments will continue to partner in this effort with MIIA Blue Cross Blue Shield of New England. I am pleased to be a part of these efforts." ■



FIGHTING FOR FITNESS

Firefighter Nick Putnum, AFT Amesbury President Cindy Yetman, Amesbury educators Amanda Ting, Karen Pratt, Karen DiPietro, and Firefighter Dave Carpentier participate in a Working on Wellness class at the Amesbury Firehouse

Holding Court: New Celtics play with Boston students

On June 28, the newest class of Boston Celtics joined classes at the Ohrenberger School in West Roxbury to open a new "Music Zone" which had been paid for by a grant from the team's Shamrock Foundation.

According to the Celtics' Director of Public Relations Heather Walker, The Shamrock Foundation (www.nba.com/celtics/community/bcsf) is the team's official charity and raises money through such popular events as their annual Foundation Gala and Shamrock Classic Golf Tournament.

"The players vote and decide where the money will go," Walker explains, "and in this case, it was the Ohrenberger."

As the funds went to support the school's music program, one of the point people for the project was Ohrenberger music teacher Kenrick John.

"Two days before our initial meeting with the Celtics Foundation, I was told to think of what my dream classroom would look like," John explains, noting that this was the first time the team had decided to support a music program. "I told them that I had been dreaming for many years, and presented them with my list."

In addition to requesting a stu-

dent-centered music lounge where students could collaborate creatively and express themselves, John also asked for a teacher-centered area where the elements of music would be taught.

"I explained that my goal was to bring music education and the classroom into the 21st century," he says. "I



MAKING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER

Celtics players Jabari Bird (left) and Semi Ojeleye jam with students at the Ohrenberger School

wanted to have a digitally-interactive learning environment to deliver instructions and assessments... more efficiently with the aid of music technology, instruments and production equipment."

In addition to 17 new MacBooks containing musical software, the Ohrenberger was given new instruments and even a portable stage.

"We were incredibly fortunate in that the [team] actually found us," said Principal Naomi Krakow, noting how the team was apparently seeking an opportunity to support a local music program. "They reached out to the arts department of the Boston Public Schools and the arts department put them in touch with us."

As part of their debut community appearance, Celtics draftees Kadeem Allen, Jabari Bird, Semi Ojeleye, and

Jayson Tatum signed autographs, played with students. And jammed along on the new instruments that had been purchased as part of the seventh annual Players' Choice Grant.

"I believe we were selected because we have a very robust music program at the school with facilities that were in significant need of renovation," Krakow reasons. "We had a clear need for improvement, but also had the pre-existing infrastructure of a music program, so the Celtics could be assured that the renovations and donations would be put to good use immediately."

When asked how the new equipment will be put to use, Krakow mentioned such groups as the acclaimed Ohrenberger Ensemble, as well as the school's regular music classes.

"Today's students are tech savvy," John observes. "I believe that using integrated music technology would increase the fun and motivate our diverse population of students to create and analyze their own music and the music of others."

At the official announcement ceremony, the four members of the Celtics' 2017 draft class played and sang along with Ohrenberger students before

signing autographs, taking questions, and playing with the students in the school's gym.

"The Celtics wanted the new players to mingle with the students as they used the donated technology and instruments," John explains, recalling a jam session during which the players and students played together on a



high-energy version of the classic arena rock anthem "We Will Rock You." "They did a really good job playing along with some of our students!"

"It's great to be able to get out here and begin making a difference within the community that welcomed me in just last week," said Tatum. "To have the opportunity to participate in an event like this with the other members of this draft class, it's a good feeling to be giving back right away!" ■

ATTENTION NEW(ER) TEACHERS

Have you been teaching for fewer than five years?

Do you want to share why you entered education?

Do you have life lessons to impart?

Do you want to support your colleagues and community?

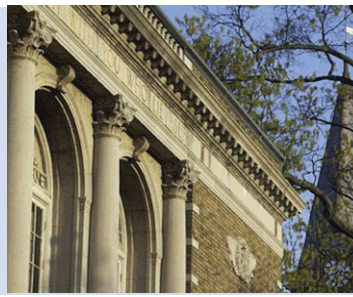
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On Campus

Susan Krumholz, President
UMass Faculty Federation, Local 1895



A Primer in MA Public Higher Educations Negotiations

The UMass unions on all four campuses - Dartmouth, Boston, Amherst, and Lowell (for the record, the medical school is not unionized) - are currently in negotiations with either our individual campus administrations, the UMass President's office, and/or the Commonwealth. Our current contracts expired June 30th.

While local school departments, libraries, or private universities have their share of negotiation concerns, not everyone may understand some of the challenges unique to public higher education in MA. Hence, this review.

When UMass unions negotiate, tradition (but not law) dictates that the Governor sets the financial parameters for negotiating, in effect telling us in advance the maximum percent allowable for raises in any three-year contract. Massachusetts law provides that contracts shall be for three years. The Governor must also approve the contracts, essentially agreeing to fund them or to submit them to the legislature to fund them. According to Mass General Law (MGL), all collective bargaining agreements must be submitted to the Governor within 30

days of being executed by the parties. If he fails to recommend to the general court that they appropriate the requested funds within 45 days of the request, MGL says that the request shall be "referred back to the parties for further bargaining." (MGL. Ch. 150E, Section 7 (c)).

In my experience (which dates back only about four contracts) the Governor has not sent the contract back. Though he occasionally waits for the 45th day, he always forwards the contract to the legislature. None of this, however, seems to guarantee that the legislature will actually fund the contracts, nor (as we discovered during negotiations for our last contract) that the University will accept that the legislature funded it, unless the line item is clearly delineated. A further factor is that the legislature typically only funds the first year of the contracts and expects the University to fund years two and three. The result of this is that the effective budget of the University decreases in every three-year contract cycle.

Our union begins requesting that negotiations commence about nine months in advance of the expiration

of the existing bargaining agreement by writing a letter to the UMass President's office. In the most recent negotiation cycle, this letter was sent in October of 2016. We typically hear from our campus administration that they are prepared to begin negotiating a few months later. In this instance, it was in late April of 2017. We first met to begin negotiations in June. But we (and the administration I suspect) are unsure how to proceed as the Governor has yet to announce the financial perimeters. While there have been rumors, the questions remain as to how much work we are prepared to undertake and how many issues we are prepared to open when we don't know if we are being offered any money for the next three years. This may be the concern for these negotiations, but negotiating on the state level, facing elections, tax and revenue increases or decreases, and the ever-present legislative whim, often raises these sorts of complications.

On a more positive note, a recent development in our negotiation process is that we have been collaborating much more with the unions from the other UMass campuses. Last

year, a negotiating team comprised of individuals from many of the UMass locals meet to discuss tuition remission for staff and family members. And though there was no permanent resolution reached, the process was deemed to be successful. Discussions are ongoing about what other issues might be comparable for employees throughout the UMass system so that we can employ a similar strategy.

During the last year I, along with other negotiating team members from various UMass Dartmouth unions, have participated in a number of collaborative sessions with UMass unions from the MTA and SEIU, among others, designed to identify common issues and to strategize collective processes. We also continue to work closely with the other unions on our campus, which include AFT, AFSCME and IBPO.

All negotiations are fraught, probably more so in 2017 than any time in memory. But I hope this was of interest to both public higher education union members and for those of you viewing this process from the private and/or local level. We are all in this together! ■

The Labor of Learning

UMass Dartmouth center offers classes in class action

At this critical time in the history of American labor, unions are doing all they can to educate and engage members. And while standardized testing and other demands may have squeezed civics out of many schools, there is still a place where students can go to learn about the history and importance of the Labor movement.

Named in 1975 for a pioneering organizer of the Southeastern Massachusetts Textile Institute (from which UMass Dartmouth was born), the Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center (www.umassd.edu/labored/) maintains a dual focus on social justice and workers' rights and a dedication to cultivating solidarity between workers and community members.

"The Labor Education Center offers education for positive social change and justice for working people," explains Director Kim Wilson. "Our work is in developing leadership and skills among students, labor activists, and community members."

With a primary goal of meeting the educational needs of workers as members and leaders in the labor movement and as active and responsible citizens in the community, the Center offers classes, resources, and other supports to union members. The Center also serves as a liaison between the University and labor organizations and promotes awareness of workers while also promoting a greater understanding of and cooperation between labor and other civic and community

organizations.

A core part of the Center's offerings is the Workers' Education Program (WEP). Since 1986, WEP has brought English classes to union workers in their factories, and in the community.

Currently, it offers a range of free Adult Basic Education classes, most of which are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). WEP also offers classes in downtown New Bedford. In the last year alone, students attended 46,530 hours of classes, making WEP one of only three programs in the Commonwealth to maintain consistently high performance in all attendance, pre/post assessment administration, and learner gains.

The demand for such offerings is so great across the Commonwealth that the Center now offers many of its programs at other UMass campuses, including Amherst, Boston, and Lowell. As it is based near New Bedford,

however, the Center has forged a special bond with the local immigrant community and waterfront workers.

The links between town and gown are not just academic, however. Each year that it is offered, the Center part-



STUDENTS OF SERVICE

UMass Students at the Dubin Labor Education Center

ners with the Working Waterfront Festival to celebrate the history and community contribution of the shoreside workers. The Center has also been involved with other cultural events, including the creation of a mural depicting the history of labor in New Bedford and a photography exhibit involving a partnership with the Zeiterian Theater of New Bedford that featured images created by local union members of area workers doing what they do best-serving the community.

"This internship has brought me closer to the...labor force side of New Bedford," says Sociology major Winona Glascock. "I know that getting a stronger understanding of the wage

gaps and unfair treatment of workers will help me understand where change needs to happen."

"I hope to gain organizational skills and experience working with interest and advocacy groups to promote policies that help our society at all levels," adds Political Science and Philosophy major Zac Marc-Aurele.

While the Center provides a great deal of support to established workers and unions, it also offers UMass students a place to learn about and become involved in the Labor movement. In addition to offering paid internships, the Center also engages students involved in such departments as Sociology/Anthropology and Crime and Justice Studies by offering academic credit for their programs. New students can also get to know local labor leaders while enjoying a day in the community during the Center's popular labor history walking tour of New Bedford (which has been part various academic courses on campus). During the summer, the AFL-CIO co-sponsors the Union Research Summer School, where Center members can learn to be union researchers and campaigners. There is also an organizing institute that the AFL-CIO offers that trains potential labor leaders and a partnership program during the school year with the City University of New York (CUNY).

"What I learn here will not stay in my mind," Glascock asserts. "I intend to educate and make waves with what I learn." ■



Retiree Corner

Marie Ardito, Co-founder
Massachusetts Retirees United
www.retireesunited.org



Do Not Go Gently Into Retirement

A question to ponder- Did you retire *from* something or did you retire *to* something?

Five years prior to reaching retirement age, experts recommend that you ask yourself what you want to do in retirement. I recommend the that you repeatedly ask yourself that question during your retirement years. Retirement does not guarantee happiness. The only thing worse than burnout is boredom. Depression is very real among retirees who did not think of what they wanted to do in their retirement years.

There is nothing more unpredictable than retirement, especially when some think of it as unending bliss and doing all the things you want to do when you want to do them. The first thing that is unpredictable is the length of time you will have in retirement. According to the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System, in one particular month of 100 deaths, the length of time retired was from 44.5 years to just under three years! None of us know how long we have in retirement, but if we are to hope for longevity, it is imperative to plan for what we are going to do with those hours, days, and years we formerly spent working. Determine for yourself whether your goals are based on satisfying yourself or serving others.

America has long underutilized its greatest national resource- its retirees.

Seniors have experience, interests, and most importantly, time to get done what truly needs doing. If you

that none of them thought when they were younger that this is where they would end up. None of us know what

lies ahead for us, so we must prepare as best we can.

While many enjoy long-held hobbies during retirement, others use it as a time for exploration. Many have gotten additional degrees in retirement in areas very different from what they did in the work force. My dream in the years leading up to retirement had

been to get a law degree to be an advocate for seniors. Then the teacher in me took over and I realized that by working with retirees I could teach them to fish for themselves instead of handing them the fish.

Some of us have never done anything that we were not paid to do. Some have never experienced the feeling of knowing that we helped someone in need (which is a far greater reward than a paycheck). Retirement offers us the opportunity to do this.

Everyone needs a reason to get up in the morning. We have to know that life isn't just made up of having our hands opened to receive, but turned over to give. What do you want to retire *to*? Think seriously about it for your answer may not only enrich your life but also the lives of others. ■

Massachusetts Retirees United 11th Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held at Angelica's Restaurant in Middleton, MA, on Thursday October 5, 2017. Registration will begin at 9:15 AM. A Continental breakfast will be provided, as well as lunch at 12:30 with a choice of Boston schrod or baked stuffed chicken. The fee is \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members. This is a perfect time to sign up for membership and get the reduced price!

This year's theme is Live Healthy, Live Safe, Live Free.

Our Keynot Speaker, Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan, will address scams and issues pertaining to seniors. We have also asked her to speak of the opiate problem.

Minuteman Senior Services Assistant Director Leslie May-Chibani, LSW, will speak about programs to avoid injury and to stay healthy, and will provide information about transitioning from hospital to home as well as other issues.

Wilmington Department of Veterans' Services Director Lou Cimaglia, IV, will speak on veterans' benefits, including the burial benefit that was addressed in a previous edition of The Advocate.

Members, please sign up via the registration form in Matters. Non-members can contact me at mardito@retireesunited.org or call 781-365-0205. All registrations should be submitted by September 25.

would like to get involved to make a difference, begin by thinking of where your interests lie. What have you complained about for a number of years that you would like to see changed? What have you witnessed in your profession or your surroundings that you feel should be changed? Then try to gauge what you can do about these things...and do them!

Another thing that is unpredictable is how healthy you will be- both physically and mentally. Many of us are called on to be care givers and have spent numerous hours visiting loved ones in institutions. One of the times this past year when I visited my aunt, I looked around the room and realized that it was filled with mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends- all of whom had stories to share. I am sure

SEMINARS

Preparing for Retirement

These free seminars deal with most of the issues one should address when preparing for retirement from a public sector job in MA. They are open to all.

Monday October 30, 2017, 3-5
Lynn Teachers' Union Hall
679 Western Avenue. Lynn, MA

Thursday October 19, 2017, 3:15-5:15
Chelsea High School
299 Everett Avenue, Chelsea, MA

Thursday, March 29, 2018, 3:30-5:30
Methuen Education Association Office
184 Pleasant Valley Street, Suite 1-204,
Methuen, MA

Living an Informed Retirement

These free seminars by Marie Ardito deal with such important issues as tax breaks related to selling a primary residence, avoiding double taxation of TSA, 403b, protection of major assets, understanding Medicare penalties and surcharges, working in retirement, legal issues, and understanding Social Security penalties.

Thursday September 28, 2017, 10-noon
Methuen Education Association Office
184 Pleasant Valley Street, Suite 1-204,
Methuen, MA

Monday October 23, 2017, 10-noon
Lynn Teachers' Union Hall
679 Western Avenue Lynn, MA

Protecting Your Nest Egg

This free seminar by Elder Law Attorney Mary Howie deals with such vital issues as wills, trusts, gifting, Medicare, probate, joint tenancy, direct transfers upon death, and much more

This seminar will be held in late October or early November. **Please check the next issues of *The Advocate* or *Matters* or visit www.marieardito.com to find additional seminars as they become available.**

To register, call MRU at 781-365-0205 or email contact@retireesunited.org. Please give the name of the seminar, your name, phone number and the number of people attending.

IN MEMORIAM

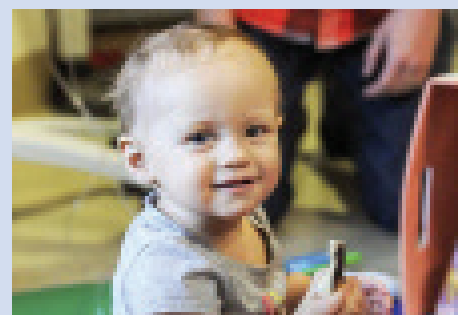
Mitchell Chester, who served as Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education for almost 10 years, died in June after a short illness.

Although the AFT MA and Commissioner Chester disagreed on many issues, we found that he took his job very seriously and worked very hard for the children of MA.



Care for "Callie"

Calliope "Callie" Carney is the one-year-old daughter of Lawrence teacher Kathryn Carney. She was recently diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and needs YOUR help to pay for her medical expenses.



To donate, go to www.gofundme.com and search for "Care4Callie"

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Berklee College of Music

Roll Out!: New Institute Takes Students on Tour

For decades, the Berklee College of Music has been a launching pad for some of the most popular musicians in the world. From local legends like Aimee Mann and Grammy Winners like Gary Burton, Will Calhoun (see July, 2013 issue) to film composers like Howard Shore and Alan Silvestri and TV legends like Trey Parker, Berklee has impacted the worlds of music and of every other art form.

“Several of us had noticed that while Berklee offered strong support for jazz, bluegrass/folk, world music and classical musicians,” says President Roger Brown, “we really had no strong, clear focus on contemporary popular music, which is about 98% of the commercial music industry.”

In an effort to build upon the impact Berklee has on the music industry around the world, Brown tapped Music Business and Management Professor Jeff Dorenfeld to create the Berklee Popular Music Institute (www.berklee.edu/focused/bpmi). In this immersive education program, students engage all aspects of the music business - from rehearsing alone and with others to booking and

promoting performances to handling touring and more – all in preparation for a live performance at one of the world’s biggest stages.

In addition to teaching at Berklee since 1996, Dorenfeld has been involved in the music industry for over three decades. As the manager for the record-breaking band Boston and the tour manager and accountant for the likes of Sammy Hagar and Ozzy Osbourne, Dorenfeld learned first-hand what it takes to go from the

clubs to the concert halls to worldwide stardom and now imparts those lessons to his students at Berklee.

“I have been bringing students to Lollapalooza for eight years,” Dorenfeld explains, noting how some Berklee students had performed at the festival in years past. “When President Brown was looking to start a new institute, I thought I could scale that and move it across more festivals.”

And scale they did- landing student performers at seven international festivals in only the Institute’s first

year! This year’s class of 18 Institute participants (who were selected from a capped list of 100 applicants) helped guide a select set of artists from demo tape to festival stage at such events as Governors Ball in New York, the Essence Festival in New Orleans, Lollapalooza in Chicago, Osheaga in Montreal, and Outside Lands in San Francisco.

“Every week-end, we go somewhere else,” Dorenfeld muses. “It’s like taking seven different groups on tour!”

In addition to their live appearances, the performing students will have their music appear on the album *Dorm Sessions 12*, which was released in February by Berklee’s own Heavy Rotation Records (the student-run label for which Dorenfeld acts as faculty advisor).

“Each team [of three students] works with one artist and prepares them to perform and handle all the marketing and all that,” Dorenfeld says, noting that both the festival stag-

es and festival-related demands are all much larger than any venue the performers have played before. “Students say it is probably the most important class they have ever taken in terms of what they learned about working with the industry.”

“The biggest takeaway from this experience,” says Institute participant Jordan Holly, “has been the hands-on training that I have been given on choosing the right artist, working with them on their performance all the way up until they have reached the stage, and all of the work that takes place once the show

is over.” “I’m getting a more in depth look at how A&R, artist development, and live music work within the music industry,” echoes fellow participant Angela Rodriguez. “I get to see how an artist goes from nothing to performing on a festival stage as well as all the work that goes into it on behalf of the people behind the scenes. It’s been an invaluable experience!” ■



LEADER OF THE BAND
Jeff Dorenfeld



ESSENCE OF PERFORMANCE
Mayah Dyson at Essence Festival

Promoting the Promoter: Berklee honors local legend Fred Taylor

While Berklee students and alumni prepare to perform at and enjoy music festivals around the world, many will come from all over to perform at the Berklee Performance Center (www.berklee.edu/BPC) on September 12 as part of a tribute to one of the true legends of the music scene- promoter and impresario Fred Taylor.

From his early days running the dynamic duo of Kenmore Square clubs - Paul’s Mall and The Jazz Workshop - Taylor has been a major player for major players with a legacy that stretches over 50 years. This concert and the scholarship to which it will donate proceeds (www.Fred-TaylorScholarshipFund.org) will help ensure and extend Taylor’s legacy long into the future.

“It’s a beautiful thing when you reach out to an artist and they say ‘Of course I will be there for Fred!’” says award-winning saxophonist Grace Kelly, who is helping to arrange the show and who also helped set up the scholarship.

Among the artists scheduled to appear and perform are Terri Lyne Carrington, Bill Charlap, Kurt Elling, Pat Metheny, John Patitucci, Danilo Perez, Esparanza Spalding, and Bo Winiker, who also had a hand in establishing the scholarship. Among the luminaries on the Event Committee are WBUR’s Robuin Young, WGBH’s Ron Della Chiesa, chef Lydia Shire, and many more.

“It is always the same reaction,” notes Kelly, who recently performed as part of Fred’s new series at the Cabot Theater in Beverly (<http://thecabot.org/>) “because everyone who

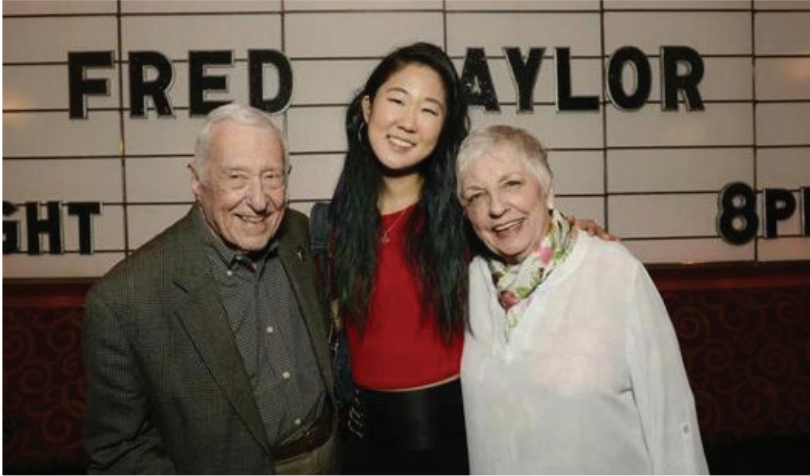
cotts and other negativity from many artists who had also played there for years, Kelly wanted to help maintain Taylor’s legacy and even expand upon it. So together with Bo Winiker, she approached Berklee President Roger Brown with the idea for the Fred Taylor Scholarship, which will support a student in Berklee’s world-famous Music Business program. “[Fred] has done more for the Boston and New England music scene than almost anyone,” Kelly observes, noting his national impact as the man behind the careers of such legends as Bruce Springsteen, Diana Ross, and Miles Davis (who was quoted as saying he would not play a gig in Boston unless Taylor was involved).

Especially as promoters often do not get the credit they deserve, Kelly suggests, this show and this scholarship demonstrate how Berklee and the Boston music community have their harmonic hearts in the right place.

“Fred is such a humble guy,” Kelly observes. “He would never point to himself, but this is the time and we wanted to honor him.”

With its recent merger with Boston Conservatory, Berklee is even stronger than ever and even better prepared to take music into the future.

“To me and to Fred, Berklee is one of the biggest and most successful music schools in the world,” Kelly notes, “and to have a scholarship with his name at such a great school.... Fred is so excited and we are very excited that they wanted to be a part of it!” ■



THE MAN BEHIND THE MUSIC
Fred Taylor with Grace Kelly and JazzBoston’s Pauline Bilsky

knows Fred feels they have a special connection.”

Though Taylor’s long-running gig with the popular club Scullers ended badly, Kelly recalls growing up in the riverside venue and seeing all the masters of music who played there.

“I have been going to Scullers every since I was six and falling asleep in my father’s arms,” the award-winning saxophonist from Brookline recalls, noting that she sat in at a Scullers show at age 12 and was headlining and releasing a CD there at 13, after Taylor heard her duet with vocalist Anne Hampton Calloway. And while she is a proud graduate of Berklee, Kelly claims that Scullers is “where I got my education.”

Despite the distressing way in which Taylor was let go from his long-term gig at Scullers and threats of boy-

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www.aftma.net

Do **YOU** know someone who should be featured in **Summa Cum Laude?**

Send their information to **advocate@aftma.net**

Thank you!