



Tired yet?

Tired of hammering your head on the bargaining table for less than the cost of inflation?

Tired of seeing your salary consumed by the inexorable and apparently inexplicable cost of health care insurance?

Tired of the breathless vacuum we now so clearly suffer in state political leadership?

Tired of hearing there is no more money for anything except tax cuts?

Tired of hearing that if we just cut state income taxes, the future will someday, finally, maybe, after a long haul and great expense be paved in gold?

Tired of hearing public and school employees are the problem and not the solution?

Just plain tired of tired partisan politics bereft of vision and hope and inspiration?

Already tired of the next legislature?

So am I.

Please stand up, speak up, sign up

Fortunately, we can do something about this.

Here's how.

Right now, all over Montana, folks are announcing their candidacies for the 2003 Legislature. They will continue to announce right up to the March 21 filing deadline.

Some of these folks actually like government and public education.

Find out these good candidates. Ask them: "Will you stand up and fight for more dollars for quality public employees and public schools? If the answer is "yes," be they Republican or Democrat, give to their campaigns. Make phone calls. Literature drops. Get out the vote. Contribute to MEA-MFT COPE.

Of course, if no good candidates are to be found in your legislative district, then why not run yourself? MEA-MFT members make terrific legislators. They introduce progressive legislation. They assume leadership roles. They vote right.

In the month of March, the Legislative Education and Local Government Interim Committee will hear public comments on the recommendations of the Governor's Advisory Council on School Funding. See story, page 10.

Attend the nearest hearing. Tell 'em stuff some committee members don't want to hear. Tell 'em no school funding system that fails to adjust for inflation will ever provide adequate funding for long. Tell 'em that a state funded, statewide school employee health care plan is more necessary now than ever. Tell 'em that a loan reimbursement program for teachers taking high demand/low supply positions should have passed last session.

"Stand Up for Education." See story, page 8. Join MEA-MFT members and staff and friends of public education as we take our story to the people. Bring neighbors, potential voters, legislative candidates to our community meetings. Take an hour to help us present our case. We have developed a powerful video. Definitely worth seeing. We have much to show.

Involvement is the antidote

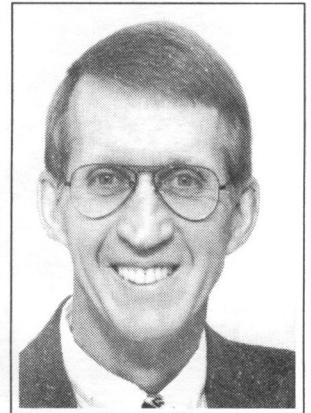
Run for and get elected as a delegate to the MEA-MFT Representative Assembly meeting April 5-6, Billings.

The RA is our annual business meeting. Here MEA-MFT members and leaders from all over Montana debate and adopt our legislative program, resolutions, new business items, constitutional amendments, dues, and budget. Here we elect our officers. Here we recommit to our members, our programs, and the state and local communities we serve. Here we challenge ourselves to stop being tired!

Hope springs eternal

Hard work and confrontational as it most certainly is, our democracy demands we step forward to promote our mission and scatter the voices and votes of those who devalue, belittle, or take quality public services and public schools for granted.

We either join the fray, or those who don't like us much, who won't pay competitive salaries, who would privatize us out of business, who wish us to be submissive and silent—even as they continue to blunder about in their aimless, myopic, mean-spirited way—those folks win. We lose and continue to be just plain tired. ■



BY ERIC FEAYER
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