



# TEACHER'S PET

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS OF TENNESSEE  
April, 2006 Volume 12, Number 5 [www.teacherspet.com](http://www.teacherspet.com)

## Important Information Affecting Many Tennessee Teachers

Many teachers in Tennessee have not been a member of Professional Educators of Tennessee or the teachers union the past few years because they were covered by "school board" or TSBA insurance. The word was even put out that this insurance was comparable to that furnished to the members of TEA or PET.

While it was true that the "school board" insurance was a mirror copy of that offered by the TEA, it was never even closely equivalent to that which PET carries on you. The Executive Director of the TSBA even authored a letter pointing out the areas in which our insurance was superior.

The important thing to know at this point is that **most of these teachers do not know that this program has been canceled.** A few districts have notified their teachers that they are no longer insured. We have found that some districts are not even aware of the situation.

If you have friends, colleagues, or even student teachers that are not a member of PET or the union, do them a big favor and let them know that they working without being covered by any insurance. Some may have insurance through a homeowner policy rider. Tell them that they should check to see if it covers everything, liability, criminal charges, job action, and alleged civil rights violations. Most of those riders only cover the liability issues, which rarely is the problem.

We would be happy to have any of these teachers or student teachers become PET members. PET memberships are twelve-month memberships. If they want to join us now, they will be covered for a full year. Just have them call us at 800-471-4867 or go to our website.

Don't be timid on this. You may save someone's job or life savings.

### **There are leaders and then there are LEADERS.**

Cathy Kolb, President of Professional Educators of Tennessee

There have been thousands of books written about leadership and what makes a good leader. In the education realm, one finds examples of outstanding classroom teachers accepting administrative positions yet failing miserably in their efforts to lead other educators. What are those special qualities which cause teachers to pledge their loyalty and follow administrators in the daily business of "school"?

Twenty-six years teaching experience at elementary, middle, high and college level institutions and working for eight different administrators in six different school systems has lead me to these conclusions about what constitutes a great leader.

Great leaders do not "look for" recognition of their own successes. They promote the

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<http://www.teacherspet.com>

"Teachers  
By  
Calling..."

Professionals  
By  
Choice!"

Your  
Professional  
Alternative"

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## What were they thinking?

Conclusion - by Dennis L. Farrell

The second of a  
2-part series

In the first article we discussed two of the "reasons" teachers voted to begin Collective Bargaining in Madison and Marshall counties. In this article we will discuss the last two.

"We wanted the financial benefits that come with negotiations."

"We wanted to have a greater voice in how things are done."

"We wanted someone who would represent our interest."

"I wanted to be respected as a professional."



### ***"We wanted someone who would represent our interest."***

They say that they are working at representing teacher's interest. "We expect parents to work in the best interest of the kids. We're working in the best interest of the teachers."— Hudson (Ohio) Education Association President David Spohn. (October 9 *Akron Beacon Journal*)

The earlier discussions make it apparent that unions do not assume teachers are interested in maintaining or improving their standard of living, but are interested in blocking any changes in the school system. How do we know what assumptions union leadership makes about how best to represent teachers? The answer is to look at the Resolutions that are annually set and used by the Representative Assembly to define direction for the NEA.

### **"Who sets NEA policy?"**

NEA members nationwide set Association policy, most notably through an annual Representative Assembly (RA) that convenes an Annual Meeting every July. NEA members at the state and local level elect the more than 9,000 RA delegates who, in turn, elect NEA's top officers, debate issues and set NEA policy. Between Annual Meetings, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee are NEA's top decision-making bodies. "(NEA website)

The Resolutions are directly from the NEA website. The author's emphasis with underlining, bold facing, italicizing and other notations has been added for clarity.

### **Pro-Abortion Resolutions**

#### C-1. Health Care for All Children

The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health care.

#### I-13. Family Planning

The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom.

The Association also urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

### **Pro-Homosexual agenda Resolutions**

B-10. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Discrimination  
The National Education Association believes in the equality of all individuals.

Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and people with disabilities.

Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools

[Note: No longer is this about tolerance – it is about promotion]

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Members can help keep the publication coming on a regular basis by submitting articles and ideas. We welcome submissions by letter, email, and computer disk in .doc files.

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## B-46. Sex Education

The National Education Association believes that the developing child's sexuality is continually and inevitably influenced by daily contacts, including experiences in the school environment. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. [Anything goes without requiring Parental approval]

The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture, diversity of sexual orientation and gender identification ...

## One world government under the UN Resolutions

### I-1. Peace and International Relations

The Association supports the principles stated in the United Nations (UN) Charter and believes that the UN furthers world peace and promotes the rights of all people by preventing war, racism, and genocide. [Note: Has the UN ever prevented?]

### I-2. International Court of Justice

The National Education Association believes in the concept of the rule of law throughout the world and recognizes that the International Court of Justice is one instrument to resolve international disputes peacefully. The Association urges participation by the United States in deliberations before the court.

### I-3. International Criminal Court

The National Education Association believes that the International Criminal Court is critically important as an instrument to help end the impunity of human rights violators, provide for the rule of law, and hold accountable those who commit the gravest human rights crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The Association also believes that the United States should ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and recognize and support its authority and jurisdiction. [This is a new resolution this year and it would allow our soldiers to be tried by an international court for "war crimes".]

These three issues only represent a part of the NEA's social agenda. Other issues are:

**OR:** Gun control, National Health Care, Race Quotas, Tax paid education of illegal aliens

**AGAINST:** English as the Official Language, Freedom OF Religion (or Freedom FROM Religion)

These resolutions represent NEA's chosen ways to represent teacher's interest. Union leaders know (through surveys) that teachers are evenly split between conservative and liberal points of view and have overwhelmingly said that they believe the union should stick to education only. In spite of teacher's beliefs and desires, union leadership chooses to represent teacher's interest according to their own ultra-liberal beliefs. Union leaders represent teachers by pressing their own agenda – in the name of teachers.

***What were they thinking?***

## ABOUT THE PET FOUNDATION

In 1998 the Professional Educators of Tennessee formed a foundation for the purpose of receiving, administering and expending funds for purposes relating to education including:

- **Educational Research and Professional Development**
- **Grants and Mini Grants to teachers for special projects**
- **Scholarships to current students and teachers wishing to further their education**
- **Community projects which benefit parents, students and teachers**

"PET itself is a professional association of more than 3000 like-minded educators across the state. Members believe they can best serve the children and community by focusing on education in a positive collaborative way.

Send your donations to PETF, P.O. Box 1175, Columbia, TN 38402

***Donations to the PET Foundation are tax deductible***

To receive an application for a 2006 - 2007 PETF classroom project grant, contact PETF at the above address.

## ***“I wanted to be respected as a professional.”***

How can putting a contract in place that declares “Equality” supreme over “Fairness” help gain professional respect. The effect of a contract is to ensure the treatment of the hardest working best teacher in the system will be equal to the treatment of the laziest worst teacher in the system. And yes, every system has both. Negotiation creates policy and procedure that does not reward excellence or professionalism, but contractually protects mediocrity and poor performance.

The equality breaks down when it comes to the union treatment of its dues paying members. Better employees receive fewer benefits. Any union rep will share with you, “5-percent of the members demand 95-percent of my time and resources.” Isn’t it good to know that the protection paid for with local dues goes mostly to the members who act in the least professional ways? Which teachers have more bearing on your professional reputation? The hardworking high-performing teachers or the few bad apples that your dues keep employed? How can having a union represent you in the union way (negotiations) gain you a “professional” reputation?

### ***What were they thinking?***

#### **QUICKIE QUIZ**

Who is thought of more highly and compensated accordingly?

- The person who acts in a trade unionist way (an adversary)
- The person who acts in a professional – collegial way (a partner)

Who is thought of more highly and listened to about how to do things?

- The person who acts in a trade unionist way (an adversary)
- The person who acts in a professional – collegial way (a partner)

Who is thought of more highly because they care about the purpose of education -- the children?

- The person who acts in a trade unionist way (an adversary)
- The person who acts in a professional – collegial way (a partner)

Who is thought of more highly and their interest is considered important?

- The person who acts in a trade unionist way (an adversary)
- The person who acts in a professional – collegial way (a partner)

This is not rocket science; again I ask, ***“WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?”***

### **This Could Save You Some Money.**

GET READY, the “sales tax holiday” is just around the corner! Tennessee, 11 other states, and the District of Columbia have enacted a holiday to exclude sales tax on certain items. Do you need a new computer, clothes, or school supplies? The tax holiday in Tennessee is from 12:01 AM the first Friday in August to 11:59 PM on the following Sunday (August 4-6). The following items will not be taxed during the holiday: A) clothing that cost \$100 or less per item; B) school supplies that cost \$100 or less per item; and C) computers that cost \$1500 or less per item. Clothing is defined as human wearing apparel suitable for general use. Clothing accessories, protective equipment, and sport or recreational equipment are **not** eligible for the holiday. A school supply is defined as an item used by a student in a course of study. Many school art supplies are excluded. School textbooks and workbooks do **not** qualify for the holiday. Computer software does **not** qualify for the holiday. Refer to the Tennessee Department of Revenue website for more information. Once you reach the website, click on **Revenue Review-Quarterly Newsletter** and then click on **January 2006**.

**THE MOORE SCHOOL LAW REPORT, Dr. Richard Moore, 3/31/2006**

## **Season of Faith's Perfection**, by Steven W. Simpson, Ph.D.

Do you recognize that title? It is the title of an article published by Sean Connery's character, William Forrester, in the movie *Finding Forrester*. It has become for me a symbol of how complex teaching is, of how much we cannot know about our job, of how much we do based on our faith.

In the movie, one of the great teaching movies of all time, William Forrester helps a young student learn to write. He pulls one of his articles from a dusty file cabinet and tells Jamal to start by typing words from the article. He tells Jamal to type the words from the article until he feels his own words. Jamal types the title, and the first paragraph from Forrester's article, then begins using his own words, and completes an original piece he later enters in a writing contest at his school. At the moment Jamal acquires faith in his own words, Forrester shouts, "You're the man now Dog." It is a moment of pure teaching joy.

This bit of help turns into a nightmare for Jamal. A teacher at his school, a very mean teacher, jealous of Jamal's remarkable talent, finds the quote from Forrester's article at the beginning of Jamal's writing. Jamal is called in and asked if he can explain how William Forrester's words got into his essay.

Jamal, having promised Forrester he would never mention their friendship, remains silent. He does not reveal that Forrester gave him permission to use the title and first paragraph, and is accused of cheating. His entry is pulled from the contest and his future at the school is threatened.

In the movie, Forrester walks into the assembly and in front of the students and administrators of the school, explains that Jamal is his friend, a young man of integrity, and also, by the way, a writing genius. It is one of the most powerful feel good scenes in film. But it is fiction. Real life in the classroom does not always turn out as well.

In our world, unlike Forrester's world, the bad guys often win. We help our students find their words, we inspire them to test themselves and trust themselves. Then, too often, we watch as violence, drugs, crime or some mental health problem pulls our kids down.

They stop coming to class, or they come to class and scream and throw things in their mixed up, emotional upheavals. In our world, we don't always end the day with our kids winning a prize for writing skill and integrity.

We sit in our chairs, shocked by a screaming child or a brutal, cruel act of madness and wonder where we will get the energy and motivation to stand again in front of a group of students. We look at our classroom, bleary-eyed and worn out, and rethink a lifetime of work. What are we doing here in this labyrinth of psychology and bureaucracy, this convoluted mixture of passion, educational learning objectives and standardized tests?

For me, these bleak moments of classroom truth, always take me back to the same place. The details do not seem to matter- too many IEPs to write, an ugly incident with an out of control kid, a violation of trust with another teacher or administrator; it all takes my breath away for awhile until I am able to regain my balance. I sit in my chair and I let my heart catch up with my mind.

All good teachers are believers. In the end, it is "faith's perfection" that drives us to walk back into that classroom and begin teaching. It is "faith's perfection" that gives us the strength we need to be calm and kind in the face of anger and rebellion.

It is "faith's perfection" that provides the meaning in our job. We go to work, do our best to help our students learn, take our beatings, and get back up. We do this because we believe; we have faith in education, in our kids and in our work . . . in perfection. Our goal is perfection.

We want students taken to their capacity, filled with curiosity, love of learning and sent out to find happiness and fulfillment. The reality of the job is not perfection. It is some crusty, smelly classroom in a run down school that can't afford paper for the copier or blinds for the windows. The reality is absent or abusive parents, lost kids who hurt themselves or others, and a work load that is crushing.

Still, our goal is perfection. Faith's perfection. Like Forrester, we understand that at the core of it all, we must write our first draft with our hearts, and deal with everything else using our minds. We get up from our chairs, walk through our empty classroom, past the piles of ungraded papers and remember what we really do for a living.

We cannot know what effect our efforts will have on the lives of our kids. We will never know what they remember, what they learn from us. We teach our lesson plans and do what we can to help our kids. But in the end, our job is too complex and we cannot really know how well we are doing. We play out our season and have faith that our work is working.

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## **NCLB - Highly Qualified - How are we doing?**

Under federal pressure, most states are close to getting teachers who are rated highly qualified in front of every math, history, language and other core class by the end of the school year. Thirty-three states claim 90 percent to 99 percent of their main classes have teachers who are highly qualified. That means, based on the No Child Left Behind law, that those teachers have a bachelor's degree, a state license and proven competency in every subject they teach. Most of the other states put their numbers a tier below - 70 percent to 89 percent - and a few are way behind, according to a review of new state data.

President Bush and Congress have promised parents that 100 percent of core classes will have highly qualified teachers by the end of the school year. With few states, if any, expected to reach full compliance on time, the department plans to allow an extra year to states that have shown a good-faith effort. Others could lose millions of dollars in aid if federal officials don't see enough progress.

"What we're trying to measure is whether states are on track," said Rene Islas, who oversees teacher quality for the department's elementary and secondary education office. "They don't necessarily have to be at 100 percent, but they have to be pretty close, and they have to be pretty close in all of the areas we're measuring."

According to data compiled by The Associated Press, Tennessee ranked in the bottom 10 states for having qualified teachers in poorer schools. Tennessee had 88 percent in poorer elementary schools, compared to the national average of 95 percent, and 71 percent in poorer secondary schools, compared to the national average of 92 percent.

State officials said they believe they will meet the deadline to have all core teachers designated as highly qualified.

*Associated Press, April , 2006*

## **Are we overlooking teaching the significance of the Constitution?**

Only one in four Americans can name more than one of the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment (freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly and petition for redress of grievances.) But more than half can name at least two members of "The Simpsons" cartoon family, according to a new survey. The survey found more people could name the three "American Idol" judges than identify three First Amendment rights. They were also more likely to remember popular advertising slogans. It also showed that people misidentified First Amendment rights. About one in five people thought the right to own a pet was protected, and 38 percent said they believed the right against self-incrimination contained in the Fifth Amendment was a First Amendment right.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi060228museum,1,4808182.story?coll=chi-news-hed>

## **LEADERS**, continued from page 1

successes of others. They are reluctant to be in the spotlight and never feel comfortable pointing out their own accomplishments. They tend to stay in the background while empowering others to believe in themselves and what they can accomplish. They lead by example, never asking others to do what they are not willing to do themselves. If one observes this kind of leader for any length of time, it will be noted that they seem embarrassed by compliments. A great leader knows any compliments given are the results of others wanting to follow his/her lead in accomplishing the required tasks that lead to those compliments.

Great leaders have a "vision" of what needs to be done. A leader knows the way, goes the way and shows the way (John C. Maxwell). This is what educators must believe in order to provide leadership to their faculties and quality education to their students. As PET presidents of local chapters, we would do well to adhere to these characteristics to lead our members.

Oftentimes, I hang quotes from famous historical figures outside my classroom door in the hopes that students and educators will stop and think of what the impact of living these quotes would be. I hope you will remember them in the coming days as well . . .

'Character is what you do when no one is looking'. (Author Unknown)

'The time is always right to do what is right". (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

## **Internet Tip**

Do you need to check for plagiarism in a student's work? The internet is a convenient way to start your search for the source. On either of these sites [vivasimo.com](http://vivasimo.com) or [clusty.com](http://clusty.com) copy a portion of the disputed text in quotes and press 'cluster.'

# Join us for our 15th Anniversary Celebration in Gatlinburg!



## Professional Educators of Tennessee 2006 Annual Meeting

**June 9 - 10**  
**River Terrace Resort**  
**Gatlinburg, Tennessee**

Meet and confer with your state and national leaders.  
Learn the current projects of PET and the PET Foundation  
Have a say in the direction and governance of your association

Recreate with friends new and old  
Come Thursday and stay through Sunday if you want  
Next door to Ripley's Aquarium  
Yards from The Hard Rock Café  
Trolley pick up at the door  
In the center of Gatlinburg

The meetings start Friday at 1:00 PM and conclude at noon on Saturday. The Friday banquet and Saturday breakfast are included in your registration.

All candidates for U.S. Senate and Governor have been invited to present to those attending.

The real appeal is the opportunity to meet and talk with other PET members



Register for your room at a group rate of \$82 directly with the hotel at 1-800-251-2040. **Do not** use their website to register. You must tell the person taking your reservation that you are with the PET Annual Meeting.

**Hotel reservations must be made by May 9th.**

Register for the convention by mail with this form, or call Vanessa at 1-800-471-4867

**Registration Deadline: May 26, 2006**

The price including both meals is only  
\$10.00 each member or accompanying spouse  
\$300.00 for non-members

Mail to Professional Educators of Tennessee  
810 Crescent Centre Dr, STE 130  
Franklin, TN 37067

\_\_\_\_\_ name(s)

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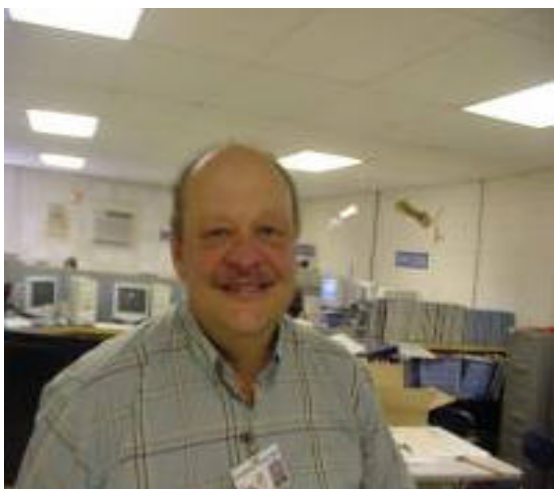
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## Meet Your Board

The Professional Educators of Tennessee Board of Directors is composed of nine class one (Professional) members who are elected by our other professional members to three year terms.



C. Mike Ridenour was elected to the PET Board in 2004. He has taught Technical Education in the Campbell County school system for the past ten years. He currently teaches at Campbell County High School. Previous to coming to Campbell County he was a Journeyman Tool-maker in the automotive industry and taught Industrial Arts in Pontiac, Michigan.

Mike is married to the former Sharon Mills who is the Vocational Director for Campbell County. He is an avid sportsman and very active in the Masonic and Shrine organizations. He explains that the Shriner's main goal is to help crippled and burned children with free medical help and transportation.

Mike received his B.S. from Western Michigan University and a MA from Nova Southeastern University. Along with being a member of PET he is also a member of the Tennessee Engineering Education Association.

Other organizations and honors include:

- Epsilon Pi Tau, Inc. 1975
- Masons, 1980 - present
- Scottish Rite, 1980 - present
- Shriners, 1980 - present and Director's Staff
- Order of Quetzalcoatl, 2000 to present
- Campbell County Teacher of the Week 2004

Mike's professional goal is to encourage his students to become better citizens and individuals to live and work in the global market.

**"Thanks to each of you for your thoughts and prayers since the November 8 incident at Campbell County High School. School safety is a high priority in all schools in the**