

*President's Message:*

**UNIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ARE UNDER ATTACK! DON'T SIT BACK AND LET IT HAPPEN!**

If there was ever a time to get involved with union activities it is NOW. The future of collective bargaining across the state and the county is at stake. The attacks we have seen in several states against public school teachers are absurd, unprecedented, and quite ALARMING. But they are real.

In our state the Massachusetts Municipal Association is pushing legislation again in this session that would weaken or eliminate our collective bargaining rights relative to health insurance. We all need to be in contact with our state senators and legislators (post cards, email, phone calls, or in person) and tell them not to take away our right to bargain over our health care.

If we lose the ability to negotiate over health care, which we currently have, it's just a matter of time before the legislature goes after our ability to bargain over any aspect of our wages, hours, and working conditions.

It's like peeling away an onion, one layer at a time.

Will school committees eventually be able to tell us we have to work a longer day? How about a longer year? What about our evaluation tool? What about just cause for dismissal? What about seniority as criteria for hiring and firing?

What's happening in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and other states across the U.S. is scary. Teachers and other municipal workers are being treated like scapegoats. We did not cause this recession. The pensions we collect, or will collect, did not cause this recession.

We teachers knew when we chose this career that we would never get rich, but we also knew that we would have a defined benefit pension if we retired from this profession in Massachusetts. Could they change the laws regarding our pensions?

We can't sit back and let things happen without a fight. We have the right to organize and form unions. Collective bargaining is all about sitting down and having a discussion about our wages, hours, and working conditions. We can never take that for granted. Get involved. Stay informed.

The MTA will soon be sending out post cards to send to your state legislators regarding possible changes to our health insurance. Don't sit back and assume that these changes can't occur in Massachusetts. Even if you don't carry health insurance with the Town of Braintree, GET INVOLVED!

This is about the future of unions and collective bargaining here in Massachusetts and across this country. We have to take action about the things we feel strongly. These are most interesting and alarming times.

Stay tuned! Get involved!

Yours truly,



Larry Kramer

P.S. Thank you so much to all BEA members and others for your thoughtful cards, kind words, and generous donations honoring my mother at the time of her death.

## **MTA Leadership Conference at Williams College August 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>**

Every summer the MTA sponsors a stimulating conference geared to people who are active in their local association or ANYONE who is would like to become more involved in the BEA, MTA, NCTA, and or the NEA.

Sessions include topics on all kinds of union issues, curriculum issues, diversity, fitness, and more. Guest speakers and an array of special activities fill the week. All this in the beautiful setting of the Berkshires makes for a wonderful experience.

You can stay at Williams for as many days as you wish. The BEA will pay all expenses. Don't hesitate to ask questions of any of the following people from the Braintree Public Schools who have attended MTA's Summer Leadership Conference: Larry Kramer (East), Bill Kendall (BHS), Lisa Pacino (Hollis). Christine Giacomozzi (Hollis), Rhonda Terrill (Hollis), and Karen Lauria (Hollis).

Consider attending Williams this summer. You'll meet people from all over the state. Lots of opportunities and possibilities await you. Ask questions and get involved. You just might enjoy yourself and open up some very interesting doors.

**Lg 1 bdrm apt in Quincy 1 mile from Braintree line in quiet 5-unit building. Lndry & strg in bsmt. \$850 per month - no pets/no smoking. Available May 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact Tina Ranieri-DiPace at Liberty School or call 617-719-6802**

### **MTA Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly (RA):**

The MTA (Massachusetts Teachers Association) Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> & May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Boston at the Sheraton Hotel and the Hynes Convention Center.

The Braintree Education Association is entitled to thirteen (13) local delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting. If you've never attended please consider going and learning more about the business of our state union. All expenses are paid by the BEA. You will be granted an Association Day for that Friday. If you decide to attend you'll be expected to attend both days of the meeting along with one afternoon pre-convention meeting in April.

The BEA is entitled to four (4) local delegates to the NEA RA. The NEA (National Education Association) Annual Meeting or RA (Representative Assembly) will be held in Chicago, Illinois from July 2<sup>nd</sup> – July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The MTA and the BEA cover expenses for the RA. This meeting is the largest democratically run meeting anywhere in the country every year. If you decide to attend the RA you'll be expected to attend one afternoon pre-convention meeting in June. The RA is a fascinating experience.

If you are interested in attending either one or both of these meetings, send your name and a note to me at East by Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions. Many current BEA members have experienced one or both of these meetings. Again, this is a great opportunity to learn about your union and get involved.

Yours truly,

Larry Kramer

### **NCTA Honor Awards: Congratulations to Braintree's honorees for these awards!**

Every year the BEA Board of Directors nominates a Teacher of the Year and a Layperson of the Year. Larry Kramer, East Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies is the 2011 Braintree nominee for NCTA Teacher of the Year. Barbara Swain, long time volunteer from Flaherty Elementary School, is the 2011 Braintree nominee for NCTA Layperson of the Year.

Both Larry and Barbara will be recognized officially at the Norfolk County Association Honor Awards dinner on Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at Lombardos in Randolph. Your BEA building representative will distribute dinner reservations slips later in the spring. It's a special evening and all are welcome. A more detailed write-up on Larry and Barbara will appear in the next BEAM.

#### **BRAINTRE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION MESSAGE** Editor: Jane C. Cleary

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