

Plains Talk

All Organizations are NOT the Same!



— December/January
2008-2009

We know you have a choice when deciding what organization you join and want it to be an informed decision.

Choosing the professional organization that will represent you may be one of the most important decisions you make in your career. Here in Northeast Colorado there is an organization, PACE, that's proclaiming that they are a "professional organization" and is distributing its marketing materials. This compels us to point out the undeniable differences between our Association and this new organization.

1. PACE, Professional Association of Colorado Educators, and its parent organization, the American Association of Educators (AAE), are partners in an agenda to weaken public education, secure school vouchers with taxpayer dollars, and stop our Association. WHY? Because we are the strongest public education advocate—not only in our school district and Colorado, but in the nation with our 3.2 million members.

2. PACE tells everyone it is an "independent" organization. But PACE is the state level of the AAE which has been getting its money since it started in 1996 from foundations that support school vouchers and anti-Association efforts including the Walton Family, Jacquelin Hume, and Bradley Foundations. These well known, long time school voucher backers are supporting AAE and, thus PACE.

3. PACE is directly connected to Colorado school voucher funders. Its registered agent is Bob Gardner, House District 21 State Rep from El Paso County. For the last 10 years, Gardner has promoted alternatives to public schools as an advisor to the top four people in Colorado's anti-public education movement: Colorado Springs developer Steve Schuck, Denver oilman Alex Cranberg, Ed McVaney and John Saeman.

PACE is promoted by the Independence Institute (II) in Golden, a "think tank" that opposes everything our Association does. The II is pro-voucher and anti CEA/NEA—and is funded by the same people and groups that support AAE and PACE.

PACE is NOT the organization ours is—not at all, not in any way. You could say it is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

We are a huge local/state organization with complete services and highly trained staff, i.e. our UniServ Directors and all the leaders and staff from CEA and NEA who help us. PACE is only one person: school administrator Kris Enright who used to run an online school in southeast Colorado.

We are very proud of our lobbying program at the State Capitol and in Congress. Without our CEA-NEA voice, no one would speak up for us, our students, and public schools. We are proud of our success in electing Friends of Public Education who are on our side at the Capitol, in Congress, and on local school boards.

PACE and AAE, on the other hand, try to hide their politics. Their funding and support come from very political groups that spend time and money trying to get school vouchers. They are connected to very political organizations like the

Special points of interest:

- How are Associations different?
- CEA-NEA Attorney Referral
- Complimentary Life Insurance
- NEA Member Benefits Giveaway
- NEA Works-4-Me

Independence Institute. Not political? Huh?

One of the top benefits of belonging to our Association is access to a full array of job protection services, including our UniServ Directors and CEA attorneys experienced in education and labor law. Our members don't have to find their own attorney, spend their own money, and wait for a reimbursement that might never come (that's what PACE members must do if they want help). Most of our members never use the liability insurance they have as an automatic benefit of membership. But many members get help through our Legal Services Program; immediate, expert help from local Association leaders and staff who are full time, on the job, trained and experienced. PACE says it can offer cheap liability insurance, and that's exactly what it is.

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*Happy Holidays to
you and yours!*

Claim Your Dues on Your Income Tax and

....Take Advantage of “Educator Expense Deduction”

As an Association members, you can deduct the total of your unified dues (local-UniServ-CEA-NEA) as a miscellaneous itemized deduction on your federal income taxes. Your dues are one sum for January-August 2008 plus a different sum for September-December 2008 because the calendar year overlaps two Association membership years. Use your pay-

check stubs to determine the deduction amounts for your 2008 taxes. You cannot deduct your dues as a charitable contribution on your income tax return.

NEA’s lobbying efforts in Congress recently achieved continued tax relief for Association members by getting an extension of the deduction for instructional materials and classroom supplies that was set to expire at the end of this year. Teachers and paraprofessionals can

deduct up to \$250 for out-of-pocket classroom expenses as the “educator expense deduction” if you worked at least 900 hours in 2008. Your qualified expenses are subtracted when figuring your adjusted gross income. You must file IRS Form 1040 to take the deduction (claim the \$250 on line 23); it cannot be claimed on Form 1040A.

For more information, read the IRS Tax Topic #458, Educator Expense Deduction, at irs.gov/taxtopics/tc458.html

CEA-NEA Attorney Referral Program: The best value for personal legal help for you and your family.

An eligible CEA-NEA member (any Active Member, teacher or support professional, or Retired Member and the member’s spouse and dependent children) gets two free 30-minute consultations on personal legal issues during each membership year (Sept.-Aug). If you need help beyond this, our Attorney Referral Program gives you legal assistance in five core areas at a 30% discount off the normal fee. Our Association is committed to having only qualified, competent attorneys participate in our Attorney Referral Program. Before attorneys can help our members, they are approved by both NEA and CEA. They must agree to provide service at convenient times outside education employees’ normal work days and discuss fees before they provide services. They must accept fee payment by installment payment plan.

Five Core Areas: 30% discount off regular fees

WILLS and ESTATES

CONSUMER PROTECTION

REAL ESTATE

TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

2008-2009 Participation Attorneys—Fees are Pre-discount Hourly Fees

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970-867-5621 \$110

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303-776-1169 \$150-\$230

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Fort Collins, 80521 \$210
970-493-6061

Don J. Hoff, Esq.
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1025 Ninth Ave., Suite 309
Greeley, 80631 \$180
970-356-6767



www.nea.org/works-4-Me Check it out!

Dear NEA Member,

There are many new ideas out there to help teachers every day in their professional lives.

NEA has created a special website called “Works-4-Me” which has tried and true teaching hints suggested by NEA members.

Of course it’s available 24/7 at:

www.nea.org/works-4-me.org

Or if you’re interested, each week you can receive an e-mail with six helpful (and short) hints to help you in your teaching.

They will fall under the following categories:

- Teaching Techniques
- Content
- Managing Your Classroom
- Getting Organized
- Relationships
- Using Technology

In addition, you will get information about your NEA Member Benefits that are available to you through your membership in the Association.

If this looks like something you’re interested in, simply send me your email address to receive the weekly update. It’s that easy!

pam.wilson@nea.org

NEA Member Benefits December Web Site Giveaway



NEA members can register anytime during the month of December 2008 in the Free Giveaways area of the NEA Member Benefits Web Site (www.neamb.com) for a chance to **win a \$100 Best Buy Gift Card**.

Giveaway entry begins at 12:00 a.m., Eastern Standard time, on December 1, 2008 and ends at 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Standard time, on December 31, 2008.

No purchase is necessary to enter. When you enter this giveaway, you can be assured that NEA Member Benefits does not sell or share information about NEA members to any third party—**period**. This is a benefit to you as a member of the National Education Association, so we are encouraging you to go to the website and register to win.

Every month the Free Giveaway changes, so visit www.neamb.com often to register to win!



NEA Complimentary Life Insurance (formerly NEA DUES-TAB)

No-Cost, automatic coverage for all eligible members. All eligible members can take advantage of the valuable, automatic term life insurance coverage provided by NEA Complimentary Life.

All you have to do is register your beneficiary and you're covered so don't wait, do it now!

A guaranteed benefit that is provided at no cost to Active, Reserve and Life members

Up to \$1000 of term life insurance

Up to \$5000 of accidental death & dismemberment coverage

Up to \$50,000 of AD&D insurance for any covered accident that occurs while on the job or serving as an Association leader

Up to \$150,000 of life insurance for unlawful homicide while on the job

Your coverage is automatic but you must register your beneficiary.

Travel Tips for Airports—Know the rules for getting through airport security during the holidays. TSA

As you prepare for holiday air travel, it pays to know the procedures for getting through security checkpoints smoothly and quickly with your carry-on items.

In particular, know what "3-1-1" means. The Transportation Security Administration's "3-1-1" program: *Liquids, aerosols and gels must be in containers **three (3)** ounces or less. *Items must be put in a **one (1)** quart plastic zip-top bag. *Only **one (1)** zip-top bag per passenger.

Here are holiday travel tips from TSA:

Do not wrap gifts. If a security officer needs to inspect a package, the official may have to unwrap your gift.

Apply 3-1-1 to gifts. "3-1-1" is not just about shampoo and toothpaste. Food items such as jams, salsas, dips, etc. will not be allowed through the checkpoint in your carry-on bag unless they are in containers 3 oz. or less and in the qt. bag.

Know what items are prohibited on planes.

Dress the part. Metal in your clothing may set off the walk-through metal detector. Pack coins, keys, jewelry, belt buckles and other metal items in your carry-on bag. Shoes must be removed and screened by TSA, so wear shoes that can be easily taken off to speed the process. Winter coats, blazers, suit jackets and bulky sweaters must also be removed and put in the bin for screening.

Be considerate and save jokes for after the checkpoint. TSA says "our security officers are working to keep bombs off airplanes. Please follow their directions. Belligerent behavior, inappropriate jokes and threats will not be tolerated, and will result in delays and possibly missed flights." *This article, and hundreds more, can be found on the NEA Member Benefits web site in the "Member Library" section: http://www.neamb.com/consumer_articles.jsp*

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Sad News

We were deeply saddened to learn of Erika Krening's death as a result of an automobile accident on November 8.

Erika was the Akron EA President and a well-respected sixth grade teacher at Akron Elementary, who touched the lives of many, many students.

Our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, students and colleagues.



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Association members can take advantage of dozens of programs and services designed to help them advocate for their students, public education, and their own interests as education employees. Not only does belonging give each member a strong, unified voice with education policymakers AND give you peace of mind through quality representation and support where it matters most (on the job, in your workplace), but you get resources to help you succeed personally and professionally.

What else sets us apart from PACE-AAE? Our Core Values. We believe public education is the cornerstone of American democracy, providing children with the skills to be informed and engaged in that democracy. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity for every citizen. We advocate not only for public education, but for education employees' interests. We know that is our job—and that our individual members are strengthened by our collective action, whether at the negotiations table or in the Legislature.

This is not what PACE-AAE is about. They are about diverting precious public education resources and public tax dollars to vouchers for private and religious schools. They are about attacking public education employee organizations and limiting our members' rights. And PACE is very clear—it does not sup-

port negotiating collectively, one of the foundation programs of our organization for nearly 40 years.

When you belong to our Association, you join millions of fellow members who believe in public education and strive to provide a quality public school for every child. When you belong, you work with other members to make important gains for yourself and for all of us.

If someone you know chooses AAE-PACE over your Association, take a moment to explain the difference. Their career may depend on it one day and you'll know that they are making an informed choice.

AAE-PACE want our members so they can weaken us and keep us from being successful public education advocates. But just like a wolf in sheep's clothing, they try to deceive people into thinking they are something other than what they are. Don't be fooled.

We appreciate your membership and want your input. Please contact Pam Wilson at 800-332-5939 ext. 127 or pam.wilson@nea.org for more information about CEA-NEA or competing organizations.

