

# BTA Newsletter

March 1967

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## A Retrospective and Prospective View of the BTA

by Lois Morella

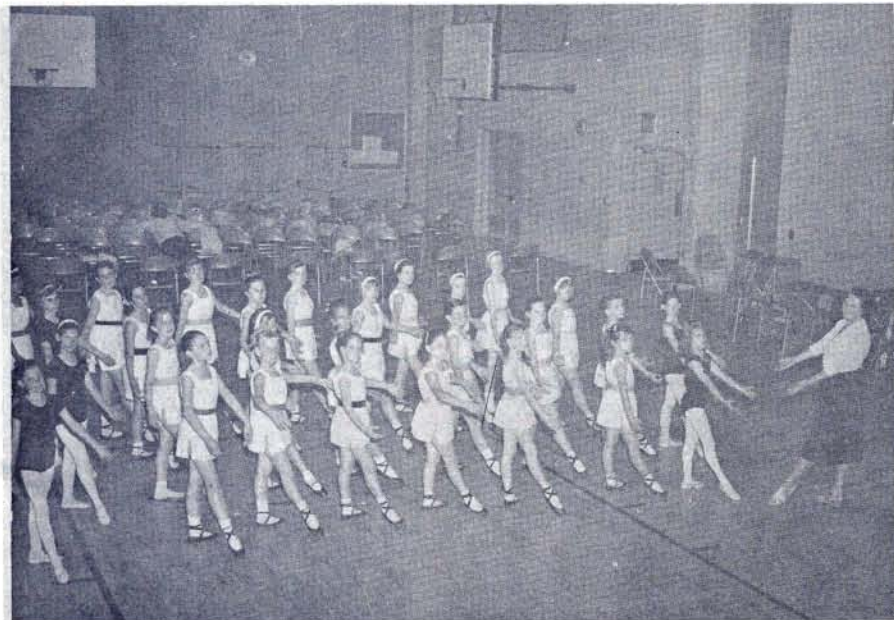
Membership in professional organizations is essential to the professional person. Thus, the teacher must strive to advance education through support of and participation in such associations. Of course, the accomplishments and attributes of NYSTA and NEA need not be enumerated as they are readily discernible in recent educational legislation and commentaries.

However, there remain some matters which can best be handled by the local teacher association. In essence, the local association promotes more individual involvement, personal concern and sincere consignment—necessary things which are neither possible nor practical in large professional organizations. And what group is more aware of the district's educational needs and is in a better position to provide for those needs than the BTA?

Over the past two years, the BTA has made noteworthy advances toward fostering professionalism and heightening the educational climate in the district. Through much effort, a teacher evaluation policy and a uniform obser-

vation form were drafted and are now in use throughout the district. Important gains were also made regarding the protection of teacher tenure rights, as well as teacher participation on the in-service committee. The Research and Finance Committee, in its negotiations with the School Board, has always procured a propitious salary schedule for the teachers. Teachers now have a voice in the formulation and approval of new curriculum, as a detailed procedure was adopted. The Administration and Board of Education have also agreed that teachers will be involved in every educational decision that affects them. Finally, the Dance Program and other activities, under the able direction of the BTA, have tripled student scholarships.

In conclusion, the BTA and this newsletter can serve as effective channels for the exchange of ideas but can deal with specific problems and issues only if you, the teacher, express your views and present your "unanswered" questions. Isn't it time we were concerned with the specifics instead of the generalities?



BTA sponsored activities, such as the Dance Program, have tripled student scholarships over the past two years.

## Message From The President

by David Martz

On orientation day I tried, in my talk with you, to point out that we are not professionals. At that time, I thanked you for your support in our effort to move toward the goal of professionalization. Now is the time to demonstrate your support.

As you know, our Association has embarked on several important projects to help us reach our goal. We have, for several months, been negotiating on a written professional negotiation agreement which calls for recognition of the Brentwood Teachers Association as the exclusive bargaining agent of the teachers and provides a structure for orderly, fruitful negotiation. A very important part of this structure is the mediation clause in case of impasse. Although we have made some progress in this area, I must admit the important clause, mediation, has little change of approval by our Board. You must act if we are to be successful.

Currently there is a bill in the State Legislature that will establish effective teacher-school board relations. Write your State Representative calling for the passage of S-929 Dominick and A-1813 Rose-St. Lawrence.

By the time this article goes to press, your negotiation team will have presented our salary proposal to the Board of Education for next year. I have already alerted you to the relationship between State-Aid and available monies for increased salaries, and I want to thank you for your quick and numerous

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## Tri-State Conference Held On Grievance

A tri-state conference, sponsored by New York University was held January 29 through February 1 at Grossinger's in the Catskills to discuss local grievance procedure. New York, New Jersey and Connecticut delegations attended the joint parley to gain greater insight into grievance procedure and all of its ramifications. The Administration, School Board and BTA were represented by Dr. Louis Nannini, Leigh Stuart, Irving Keller, Edward Sonderling, David Martz and Robert Farina.



## Cybernetics Taking a Back Seat

by Ronald G. White

John L. Burns in the January 14th Saturday Review states, "The electronic age is changing our traditional notions of education. The role of the teacher, the role of the classroom, the nature of the learning process itself must be re-examined in the light of new technology. . . . the maximum use of electronic technology by well-prepared teachers offers the most efficient method of improving the quality of educational programs."

According to Martin Buskin of Newsday the major obstacles to general acceptance of modern and improved educational instruments are the ". . . extensive problems in their use, cost and adaptability to the classroom." These obstacles will never be surmounted as long as there exists a relative paucity of suitable material needed to view educational technology in the proper perspective. This lack of "fuel" stems from, and contributes to, the determinism that, as McLuhan contends, "results from the determination of people to ignore what is going on." At first glance the term "rampant complacency" may seem to be contradictory, but it seems to label quite appropriately this strange phenomenon within the teaching profession. Educational television is not withstanding the "on-slaughters" too well. Two months ago the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, headed by James R. Killian, Jr., chairman of the corporation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, declared in a major report:

"With minor exceptions, the total disappearance of instructional television would leave the educational system (of the nation) fundamentally unchanged."

If this condition, which borders on

apathy, continues for any length of time, it may prompt even stronger statements than the one Commissioner Allen released on Monday, February 13th, at a meeting of the state delegation to the American Association of School Administrators. In the 171-page report it was suggested that school boards might recruit their superintendents from business and industry rather than from education. I hope our more erudite educators can see the handwriting on the wall.

As more and more attempts are made at compiling, comparing, and evaluating the existing data on experiments conducted throughout the country, as the classroom teacher becomes more aware of the effectiveness of electronic and technological media, and as more and more digestible and nutritive food is fed into the cybernetic system, education will begin to take on the dimensions which it needs to acquire in order to function in this complex society.

## Teachers Describe Their Job: Prestige, Long Day, Low Day

by Martin Buskin

Are teachers overworked, underpaid and unappreciated by their communities? Do they feel sorry for themselves?

While some parents who have come in contact with militant teacher groups on Long Island could provide their own answers to these questions, a recent research report by the National Education Association (NEA) has come up with facts and figures that attempt to answer these queries on a nationwide basis.

The NEA report, based on a scientific sampling of teachers' opinions and working conditions across the country, showed that the "typical" teacher spends about 37 hours a week in school, plus an additional 10 hours in school-related activities such as grading papers and attending meetings.

The mean salary for the teachers surveyed was \$6,253, exclusive of any extra pay for additional duties. About 20 per cent of the polled teachers felt that they have "high prestige" in the communities where they teach, while 64 per cent felt they enjoyed a medium amount of prestige. Asked what they would do if they could choose a different career, more than 52 per cent said they would certainly become teachers again, while only two per cent said they definitely would not choose teaching as a career.

The relatively low salary for teachers has made other sources of income a necessity for many teachers, and 44 per cent reported taking on extra jobs either in the summer or during the school year. In this category, 22 per cent of the male teachers surveyed reported holding extra

jobs outside the school system during the year.

The survey also gave a picture of the problems of the typical teacher's day. Most of the teachers reported that the school day was approximately seven hours long with about 30 minutes of that time taken out for lunch. Nearly 30 per cent of the teachers reported that they spent every lunch period either eating with pupils or supervising lunchrooms. About 61 per cent of all the teachers surveyed said they felt "moderate strain" in keeping up with the demands of their work, while 16 per cent complained of "considerable strain." Most of the teachers also said that their teaching load - the number of periods taught each week and the number of pupils in each class - could be considered reasonable, while 31 per cent thought their load was heavy.

In terms of educational background, the report showed that 93 per cent of the teachers had bachelor's degrees, but only one public schoolteacher in 1,000 has a doctorate. About seven out of 10 teachers are women, and their average age is about 40. One third of the women, but only eight per cent of the men, began full-time teaching before 1941.

Despite low salaries and the necessity for additional jobs, 42 per cent of the teachers reported taking two-week vacation trips each year for the past three years. At the same time, 65 per cent of all married teachers said their spouses were employed full time.

Reprinted from Newsday, Garden City

## Message

(Continued from page 1)

responses to the petition circulated by your delegates. Your Association has sent a delegation to Albany, as did other associations in Suffolk County, to seek support for increased State-Aid to insure that the welfare of the teachers and children of the State may be served this year.

In the final analysis, if the programs of the Association are to be successful, it will be because you, the rank and file members, make it so. If a fair negotiation agreement is to be signed, if our request for a decent school calendar is to be adopted, if a salary agreement that reflects the pay for professionals is to be granted, and if we are to be freed from the duties that are unprofessional and not related to the classroom, you must do your part.

Start by checking your membership card; 100% membership demonstrates solidarity. Stay informed as to the developments; see your delegates; read the House of Delegates Report. Be ready to do more than offer lip service to our programs. Look to New Jersey and other areas where teachers are on the move and see the effect that teacher power has when teachers demonstrate their concern and gain a voice in the shaping of their destiny.

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The Exchange Column - Ray Esack, Hemlock Park  
The Curriculum Corner - Nancy Kidd, Village

Art Editor - Susan Rapp, Laurel Park  
The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily those held by the Brentwood Teachers Association.



# The Exchange Column

by Ray Esack

The Purpose of this column is to inform the members of the B.T.A. of upcoming activities in Brentwood, as well as to relate some of the outstanding accomplishments of the teachers of the Brentwood school system.

One such exceptional honor went to Mrs. Lois Murphy, formerly of the Hemlock Park staff. She was selected as director of the entire preschool program for the Roosevelt Schools.

We would also like to extend our congratulations to three teachers who are doing a fine job under rather unusual circumstances. Irene Heller, Phil Golditch, and Greg Klebanski, all of the Village School, are teaching their sixth grades in portable classrooms.

A faculty volleyball league is being conducted in the elementary schools. There are two divisions: North and South. Games will be played on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays. Donald Maresca, at the North Elementary School, is directing the activities.

If you are interested in having any news from your school in the B.T.A. Newsletter, please send it to the editor in time for the next publication.

## Focus On The Individual

The teacher is going to be even more important in the schools of the future than now, and children will get more individual attention, in the opinion of Dr. Richard Louis Bright of the United States Office of Education. Dr. Bright, director of the office's Bureau of Research, offered reassurance to persons who may believe that the great changes ahead for education will make the teacher-pupil relationship less direct and personal, according to a report in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

He believes that schools twenty years from now will be tremendously different not only in terms of new hardware-electronics devices, computers, teaching machines and so on- but in moving toward individual rather than classroom instruction. "There will be more emphasis," he predicted, "on non-academic objectives such as social interaction among people-how to get along, how to communicate effectively. This is where the teacher really becomes important.

Dr. Bright pointed out that educators have long been unhappy that there is such a lag between the development of a worthwhile innovation in education and the time when the innovation gets into practical use in schools. Sometimes the delay covers several decades. One of the troubles, he noted, has been that researchers in institutions of higher education have not been in close touch with educators in elementary and secondary schools.

# THE QUESTION BOX

by Tony De Marco

1. I have read that you can have a statement prepared on the interest you pay on a loan from the New York Teachers' Retirement Fund. If this is true where can I send for this statement, so it can be used for tax deductions?

Robert Tagner

North Jr. High School

Any teacher who has a retirement loan may write for a statement to the following address:

Robert Crighton  
N.Y.S. Teachers' Retirement System  
143 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12210

2. Hats off to our local association for serving the needs of our teachers. But please explain why I am encouraged to join NYSTA and NEA who I find to hold a very conservative view in the long hard struggle of improving the teachers' image.

Ed Hardman

West Jr. High School

While your local association handles problems that are very close to you, NYSTA is working on the state legislative level and NEA works on the national legislative level. Both are promoting legislation that will provide quality education for our students and more professionalism for our teachers. Both organizations should be supported.

3. For the sake of fairness, I think we should look back and see where we are heading with all this Title 1, 11 and 111 money that the government has allotted us. For years we educators have been asking the Federal government for more money. Now that the money is being given to us, I wonder if

we know what to do with it. The money is here - teachers, let's come up with some ideas on how to use these funds.

Marion Gray

Laurel Park

4. Please settle an argument. I think that teachers' starting salaries are very close to salaries of those paid to bachelor's degree graduates entering business and industry. A friend who is also a teacher says that this is not so. He claims that teachers are \$2000 behind in starting salaries. Who's right?

RJP

The table below compares the starting salaries of teachers with those paid to male bachelor's degree graduates entering business and industry.

### BEGINNING SALARIES

The table below compares starting salaries of teachers with those paid to male bachelor's degree graduates entering business and industry:

Year of Grad.	AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY				
	U.S. <sup>(a)</sup> Teachers	Engineering <sup>(b)</sup>	Accounting <sup>(b)</sup>	Sales <sup>(b)</sup>	Business <sup>(b)</sup>
1962	\$4,328	\$6,720	\$5,916	\$5,748	\$5,100
1963	4,564	7,056	6,120	5,676	5,592
1964	4,707	7,320	6,408	6,096	5,880
1965	4,925	7,560	6,600	6,288	6,168
1966	5,142	7,944	6,948	6,588	6,600

### INCREASE, 1962 to 1966:

Amount	\$814	\$1,024	\$1,032	\$840	\$1,500
Percent	18.8%	18.2%	14.9%	12.8%	22.7%

Sources: (a) NEA Research Division, unpublished data. Estimates are for systems with enrollments of 6,000 or more.  
(b) Endicott, Frank S. *Trends in Employment of College and University Graduates in Business and Industry* (Annual Report, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois)

All questions may be sent to Tony DeMarco, North Jr. High School.

## THE CURRICULUM CORNER by Nancy Kidd, Village

News is being made in the curriculum areas and Brentwood has always been a pacesetter in this field. In order to keep the teacher well informed as to current trends, this column will attempt to explore the major subject disciplines for new developments.

The latest information in the Language Arts field came from Mr. Ray Fournier, Director of English K-12 and author of our structural linguistics program and text "Words and Sentences". This program is currently being used in Brentwood in Grades 2 and 3. For next year, Grades 4-6 will use ditto material on an experimental basis and in selected schools.

Although Houghton-Mifflin is still our basic reading program and district standard, teachers may now use another series for supplementary work. The advantages of this are obvious. If a child has completed the Houghton-Mifflin text, but is not ready for the next level, use of a supplementary text will keep him from repeating the same book.

The rationale behind this is that while skills may be repeated and reinforced, story spontaneity may not. Another use of the supplemental series would be when the student has completed the Houghton-Mifflin text for that grade level and can extend his skills horizontally (rather than vertically, by continuing with the next Houghton-Mifflin level.)

Continuous evaluation and re-examination of materials has been an integral part of the Brentwood philosophy. In keeping with this policy, four new language texts will be studied next year. Their use will be in key schools and on an experimental basis in grades 1-6. Although no district change will be made, the schools will evaluate and choose the most promising series for future consideration.

Elementary school teachers have always been receptive to change and its role in general human progress. This willingness to experiment and to improve, via curriculum, should continue to be a significant characteristic of all teachers.



## WHAT'S BUGGING TEACHERS

by Allan M. West

What's bugging teachers? There are many reasons. Low salaries, large classes, lack of supporting services, and inadequate teaching materials, equipment, and supplies are all conditions that are directly related to the fact that education remains the most underfinanced and underdeveloped activity in which the public is engaged.

But there are other reasons even more productive of conflict because they threaten one of the traditional concepts of public-school management - that school boards make policy, superintendents administer policy, and teachers teach.

The truth is that school boards sometimes administer policy, superintendents sometimes make policy, and one or the other (and sometimes both) often intrude themselves into the teaching process. Historically only the teacher has been kept in his place.

Times have changed. Fifty years ago the concept that public-school teaching was a profession of persons with a high degree of creativity, special competence, singularly qualified to determine the best ways and means of teaching was a dream. Today it is a fact.

Today's teachers have more college training. Fewer hold substandard credentials than ever before. The proportion of teachers holding bachelor degrees or better has increased from 60 percent in 1947 to 90 percent in 1963. The proportion holding masters degrees or higher has increased in the same period from 15 to 25 percent.

These men and women are emerging as the teacher leaders of today. They insist that professionalism gives them rights as well as responsibilities - the right to exercise professional judgement, the right to a voice in the selection of teaching materials, the right to help plan the curriculum, the right to be full partners in making the decisions that affect the conditions under which teacher and children learn.

They demand the right to influence the school board and superintendent on policy matters. Finally, teachers understand that in the large depersonalized school systems of today the professional rights they claim can only be exercised effectively through collective action.

Teachers are dissatisfied because of the inability or unwillingness of school boards and some superintendents to grasp these facts and respond to these aspirations. Thus, while teachers reach for their place in the sun, many school boards and their national organizations are firmly resistant, standing on tradition and prerogative.

These attitudes, while human and understandable, pose a major threat to

the survival of the tradition of local autonomy, for two reasons:

First, since the new breed of teacher is right, he will ultimately prevail. Prolonged intransigence by school boards will only deepen and widen the area of conflict.

Second, the educational problems in the growing urban and suburban areas are so complex, and the pressures and demands so diverse and severe, that acceptable educational programing and administration is a task that threatens to overwhelm local school boards.

The danger is that policies on difficult and divisive matters will be made, not on the basis of carefully reasoned judgements by persons who are responsible for the school program, but on the basis of which community group can out-demonstrate, out-litigate, and out-shout the other. What is needed, if local control and management of public-schools systems is to survive, is a countervailing force that can effectively offset such pressures and, together with school boards and school administrators, play a major role in keeping the formulation and administration of school policy in responsible hands. A strong, cohesive, independent local teachers' organization can and will provide such a force. The wise school board and superintendent will welcome this diffusion of responsibility.

## The Heart of The Educational Process

(The excerpt that follows is from the opening-of-school message of Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., the New York State Education Commissioner.)

It is an inescapable fact that the teacher is the heart of the educational process and that the most significant determinant of the quality of our schools is the quality of teaching.

The recognition of the importance of the teacher has been the basis of continuing efforts to improve all aspects of teaching - preparation, working conditions, salaries, instructional aids -- and to gain for the profession the status it deserves. These efforts are being increasingly successful and today the teacher, both personally and professionally, is in a better position than ever before to carry out with maximum effectiveness the great responsibilities of the teaching task.

With this general improvement has come a broadening in the character and scope of the influence of the teacher. While teachers, both individually and in organizations, have for a long time been a force in education far beyond

## CALENDAR FOR EDUCATORS

### MARCH

- 17-21 National Science Teachers Association - Detroit, Michigan
- 19-24 National Art Education Association - San Francisco, California
- 26-31 Association for Childhood Educational International - Washington, D.C.
- 26-Apr. 1 The Council for Exceptional Children (Annual, International) - St. Louis, Missouri

### APRIL

- 2-6 Department of Audiovisual Instruction (Annual, National) - Atlantic, New Jersey
- 8-12 Department of Elementary School Principals - Boston, Massachusetts
- 9-12 New York State Personnel and Guidance Association (Annual) - Kiamiesha Lake

the limits of their specific assignments, the common reaction has been to think of their "influence" as relating primarily to the student and the classroom.

This is rapidly changing as more teachers participate more fully, not only in the consideration of policies and practices of the particular school system of which they are a part, but in the broad development of the future course of education as well.

The teaching profession is unique. Service is its *raison d'etre*, and true professionalism rests on acceptance of the concept that teachers exist to serve the pupils.

Certainly there is no deviation from this principle in teachers seeking to improve their position. This is a right, and indeed an obligation of the profession. But ever in mind must be what Samuel Johnson called "the salutary influence of example." The example set by those who seek professional advancement through ways and means not consistent with the basic obligation to youth, inherent in teaching will most surely have no salutary effect, but will rather diminish the prestige and the power of the teacher both in the eyes of his students and of the public.

Important though other factors may be, teaching is still the main business of the teacher and all other considerations are peripheral to this central purpose.

An understanding man once said, "A schoolmaster should have an atmosphere of awe, and walk wonderingly, as if he were amazed at being himself." There should indeed be a sense of awe and amazement in being a teacher, in daring to take upon oneself the responsibility for the education of youth.