

The Journal of Your New NEA Director

Submitted by Becky Mayer, Ashland City School District, NCOEA's First NEA Director from Ohio

As your new NEA Director, I want to thank you for your support, encouragement and the opportunity to serve you and the State of Ohio in Washington D.C.

I have survived my first two meetings in Washington DC. The last week in September, all of the "Newbie" Freshman class from all over the country met for the first time. We are over 30 strong, including Lee Schreiner and myself. Starting Monday of that week, we received intensive training about the workings of NEA, acquainting ourselves with the policies and procedures for our new roles as NEA Directors.

On Wednesday of that week we had our Legislative training. We participated in a luncheon for the National legislative updates. In September the major issues focused on the Hurricane Disaster Relief funding and hiding a National Voucher System in the Relief Bill. If you had been following the news, the voucher system has been included. At the end of the luncheon we were sent out on a Scavenger Hunt.

Yes! A Scavenger Hunt on Capital Hill! We had to pick up a coffee cup from CUPS, a snack shop in the Senate office building, a Gallery Pass for the Senate, and eat at the Longworth Cafeteria in the House Office buildings. Lee and I partnered up to visit the offices of Senator Voinovich and Congressman Ney. After we collected our items we were to check in at the restaurant in Union Station



Lee Schreiner and Becky Mayer during their first adventure in DC.

On Thursday, we received our second Legislative up-date and went back to the "HILL" with all of the Directors. I started at 10:30 am and finished at 4:30 pm. I was able to meet with all of my contacts: Congressmen Paul Gilmore, Sherrod Brown and Bob Ney, along with Ted Strickland.

I used my "FLAT STANLEY" as an ice-breaker to meet my Congressmen for the first time. My 5th grade class has read the book about Stanley, by Jeff Brown. While sleeping, Stanley is flattened by a bulletin board. He learns that it is easy to send himself in an envelope all over the country. So my students are using their "Stanleys" for a writing project where we send our friends and relatives a journal to document what they do with

Stanley and take pictures of those activities. I was the first to use Flat Stanley and brought back pictures of our adventures in DC to my class. One of Stanley's adventures is shown below with Vicki Huff, Congressman Strickland and Flat Stanley, Tim Myers, Lee Schreiner, Deloris Rome-Hudson, Kathy Turning and me.



Friday and Saturday of that first week was then taken up with my first NEA Board of Directors meeting. I think my head is still spinning with all of the information I gained and am still processing.

I headed home on Sunday as I had completed my first week "on the job". It took me about one half of the following week back at school to recuperate.

The second weekend in December, right after our OEA Representative Assembly, I again flew to Washington DC for my second Board of Directors meeting. I started out with Lobby Day on Thursday. We were not able to see many of our Congressmen due to the Holiday break. We were able to meet with Ted Strickland however.

One of the exciting activities we participated in was a protest demonstration of Workers' Rights in front of the AFL-CIO Building. We had thousands of union members from many different unions pack the streets to listen to motivational speakers. The theme "Workers' Rights are Human Rights" was cheered loudly by the crowd.



OEA Vice-President Pat Frost-Brooks, Vicki Huff, Becky Mayer, Judy Malinowski, Kathy Turning and Tim Myers at the "Workers' Rights" demonstration.

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