

## NEA Mid-Atlantic Regional Leadership Conference

By Judy Novak and Patty Levingston  
The NEA Mid-Atlantic Regional Leadership Conference (MARLC) was held in Louisville, Kentucky, on January 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008, with the theme of “One Message, Many Voices. Triple Crown Bound in 2008: the House, the Senate, and the Presidency.” The state of Kentucky and the Mid-Atlantic Committee were great hosts, from the wonderful gift bags we got at registration, to Saturday night’s fun night, to ending the conference with a great presentation by NEA President Reg Weaver.

Patty Levingston (Madison), and Judy Novak (Mansfield), were first time attendees. Other NCOEA members in attendance were Patti Dice (Mt. Vernon), Jen Lepard (Mansfield), Becky Mayer (Ashland), and Brad Strong (Mansfield).

The group sessions on Saturday and Sunday were great and informative and dealt with a variety of subjects. The topics ranged from Creating Safe Schools for Students; Living Wage Campaigns; Effective Leadership Tools for ESPs; Skills

Initiative for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Academic Freedom in the Classroom; How to Organize Local Members and Meetings; Partnering with Parents, Families, and Communities; Advocating for Full-Day Kindergarten; School Crisis Preparedness and Response; No Child Left Behind; and WEP & GPO, and Other Changes Affecting Retirement Plans. NEA Hearings for Resolutions, the Budget, and Legislative Committees were also held.

The weekend started off with exciting words from NEA Vice President Dennis Van Roekel after dinner on Friday night. Our treat for lunch on Saturday was listening to motivating words from NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen. But the biggest event of the weekend was listening to NEA President Reg Weaver during the closing session on Sunday. The goal was to send President Weaver off from his last MARLC as President with a bang. All participants were given navy blue baseball shirts with “TEAM NEA” printed on the back, and when Reg got up the speak, everyone turned around to show him their solidarity. After a very

powerful and inspiring speech from Reg, where he shared his experiences of visits to schools and prisons where students were asked “what is wrong with schools today?” and their answers included old buildings, large classes, no books, and issues related to funding problems, Reg inspired the audience to fulfill the NEA Vision, “A Great Public School for Every Student.”

At the end of the evening, Reg was made a Kentucky Colonel by the Governor of Kentucky and was given a Louisville Slugger baseball bat with his own signature on it. Then if things couldn’t get any more exciting, Reg was giving a blanket, hand made by one of the members, which had the names of all the NEA Officers, NEA Executive Committee members from the region and the names of all the states in the region on it. It was a beautiful blanket.

The weekend was very informative and empowering from the group sessions to the wonderful guest speakers. Here are some words of wisdom from our President Weaver to think about, “Babies are born \$23,000 in debt. That is why they come out crying!”

## Tim Myers for STRS Board of Directors

At their January meeting the OEA Board of Directors voted to recommend Tim Myers’ candidacy for the active member seat of the STRS Board. Tim is a longtime leader who has engaged in high quality training about retiree health care and public pension fund policies. As the only active teacher candidate for this position, Tim understands the needs of our current and future retirees.

Tim understands the important responsibilities of STRS Board membership and will faithfully work to advance the issues of active and retired teachers alike by:

- Providing a dedicated revenue stream for retiree healthcare by working to pass HB 315.
- Maintaining public and legislative support for our public pension system
- Maintaining fiscal responsibility of STRS investments.

Tim has been fortunate to learn from years of service in OEA and NEA, as:

- An NEA director for 6 years, with two years on the NEA budget Com.
- A 12-year member of the OEA board – 11 years on OEA Budget Com.
- A district leader for more than 15 years in NWOEA.
- And a middle school computer and science teacher for more than 25 years in Elida Local Schools.
- Has taught workshops for local OEA treasurers in NCOEA and OEA.
- As HCA champion, presented the case for HB 315 at public meetings.
- Numerous presentations on the value of FCPE around OEA locals
- Strong advocate for OEA training on public pension policies
- Has attended many STRS Board meetings during the last several years.
- Has attended many training courses to prepare himself for this position.

Voting will be conducted throughout the month of April, so please watch for your STRS ballot in the mail and participate!

## Member Lobby Day

March 11, 2008

**Be sure to put this date on your calendar. OEA is sponsoring an Educator Lobby Day, March 11, 2008.**

**The day will start with a briefing at the OEA Media Center at 9:00 am. Several critical issues will be reviewed at the meeting:**

- **HB 315 – STRS Health Care Legislation. (OEA Supports)**
- **HB 423 – NBCT Stipends/Premium Pay/Collective Bargaining. (OEA Opposes)**
- **SB – 264 Eliminates Right to Strike for Classroom Teachers. (OEA Opposes)**

## NCOEA Workshop

The NCOEA Spring Workshop will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2008, at Mansfield Senior High School. Dinner will be served. Registration begins at 5:00 pm. Check the January-February issue of “Chalkdust” for complete information and registration form.