

UniServ Link

Be a Part of the Solution



"Keep on those politicians by letting your thoughts be known via town hall meetings, email, traditional mail and phone calls."

...Letitia Teneau-Sword,
OEA Board Member

I consider myself a politically savvy person. I read The Nation. I watch C-Span. My participation in the democratic process doesn't stop when I cast my vote at the polls.

With all of this experience under my belt, I felt extremely prepared to be a delegate at the National Education Association's Representative Assembly (NEA R/A) this past July in Chicago. In actuality, I was woefully unprepared. Participating at the policy making level is a very different experience from voicing your opinion and casting your vote.

Being a representative requires a huge time commitment. Long hours are spent on the floor listening to items being debated and then there is the voting.

The work is exhausting. Thank goodness I had my fellow delegates from Utah and other states to discuss issues with so that I was an educated voter. I can't imagine having to consider and then vote on those items with no input from the affected parties.

My participation at the NEA R/A created in me a true appreciation for the work that our representatives and senators do. We elect these folks to represent us at the city, state and national level regarding social and economic issues, to name just two. The fact of the matter is that many of us abandon our elected officials after the election and yet, we expect them to create policies that reflect our needs.

How many of us regularly communicate with our elected officials regarding their committee work, vot-

ing record and platform? Not many, I would guess. My time as a delegate at the NEA R/A, representing all of you, made me realize that, even though I am well informed, I am not partnering enough with my representatives. In order for the system to truly work, there must be regular, two-way communication between elected officials and us.

I would like to issue a challenge. Arm yourself with knowledge about a variety of issues. Listen to both sides so that you can make educated decisions. Take that education to the polls and vote, but don't stop there. Keep on those politicians by letting your thoughts be known via town hall meetings, email, traditional mail and phone calls. You could even consider tuning into C-Span once in a while.

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2011 UEA Convention & Education Exposition

The UEA Convention and Education Exposition will be held on October 20th–21st at the South Towne Exposition Center. (9575 South State Street, Sandy)

Highlights:

- ⇒ Jeopardy! Champion Ken Jennings
- ⇒ Governor Gary Herbert honors educators at "Superstars in Education" banquet

- ⇒ Dozens of professional development workshops
- ⇒ Educator and motivational speaker Cea Cohen Elliot

Who pays my salary???

...Rick Palmer, Ogden/Weber UniServ Executive Director

Your membership dues (NEA, UEA, WEA, and OEA) all support our local UniServ (stands for UNified SERvices) budget of which the largest line item is my salary. I work for you...now having almost 1500 bosses is not that comforting (try and please all of you all of the time...I dare you) but it is gratifying to know that I have the opportunity to not only meet so many great professionals, but also help in some small way. How does someone get a great job like "UniServ Director" you ask? Great salary, benefits, vacation, holidays and all...I taught middle school for 28 years (19 in St. George and 9 in various Idaho districts) and became involved in the association in my hometown of Aberdeen, Idaho (pop: 1500). I was elected President-Elect, but then when our AEA president was arrested for indecent

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exposure I was thrust into the leadership seat (in the middle of negotiations, which we did with the entire school board)...what an interesting way to start, eh? When I moved to St. George in 1985 to teach at Dixie Middle School in a Productivity model (no prep period for more money) I ran for my building rep in a faculty meeting and lost...only to be asked to run for President-Elect. I served as WCEA president for a couple of terms and one term on the UEA Board of Directors. I attended every meeting and training I could and felt we were doing some great things in Washington County...we had over 85% membership and when the UniServ office was opened in St. George, I applied for my first UD job...didn't get it and sulked for a long time. I continued to be involved in the association until 1996 and took a 6 year hiatus. In the interim I had applied for just about every UD spot in Utah and even in other states...always the bridesmaid never the bride, except for a UniServ Director job offer in sunny Casper, Wyoming...I was sure that I had some genetic personality flaw that kept me from getting the jobs. In the summer of 2004 my wife was working on her doctorate at USU and

I was enjoying long walks around Logan, laps in the pool, and several rounds of golf at Birch Creek. I interviewed for the Davis Education UD job...no luck...and went back to Logan with a bad attitude and almost called up Ogden/Weber to tell them I wasn't coming down to interview...luckily tremendous respect for my wife (who continually kept my spirits up) made me interview and here I am. This job is a great job with a lot of flexibility and never a dull moment, but like any other job there are days when I wish I had stayed on the farm. It is the members who make it worthwhile and the thank-you's we receive on a regular basis. It has been a tough summer for us in this association, but I have gained strength from the stalwarts in Ogden and Weber Districts. One of these days I will ride off into the sunset and one of you will take my place. For now, just a big thanks for being great bosses and allowing me to serve you in this position.

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