



CRITIQUE



The Official Publication of the Cleveland Teachers Union

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CTU, CMSD REACH AGREEMENT

Three Subs

Almira
Anton Grdina
Capt. A. Roth
Charles Dickens
Clark
Denison
Fullerton
Joseph M. Gallagher
Luis Muñoz Marin
Miles
Patrick Henry
R. H. Jamison
Wade Park

Two Subs

A.G. Bell @ Jessie Owens (Skyline)
Adlai E. Stevenson
Albert B. Hart
Andrew J. Rickoff
Artemus Ward
Audubon
Benjamin Franklin
Bolton
Brooklawn
Buckeye-Woodland
Buhrer
Case
Central/Carl & Louis Stokes
Charles A. Mooney
Charles H. Lake
Clara E. Westropp
Charles W. Eliot
Cleveland School of Arts — Dike Campus
Daniel E. Morgan
Emile DeSauze Contemporary Academy
East Clark @ Margaret Spellacy
Empire Computech
Euclid Park
Forest Hill Parkway
Fundamental Education Center Rockefeller
George Washington Carver
Giddings
Gracemount
H. Barbara Booker
Hannah Gibbons
Harvey Rice @ Jessie Owens (Skyline)
Henry Longfellow
Iowa-Maple
John W. Raper
Joseph Landis
Kentucky
Louis Agassiz
Louis Pasteur
Marion C. Seltzer
Marion Sterling
Mary M. Bethune @ Harry E. Davis
McKinley
Memorial (K-8)
Michael R. White
Miles Park @ Moses Cleaveland
Mound
Nathan Hale
Newton D. Baker
O. H. Perry
Orchard
Paul L. Dunbar
Paul Revere
Riverside
Robert Fulton
Robinson Jones @ Nathaniel Hawthorne
Scranton
Sunbeam @ Skyline Option Complex
Thomas Jefferson
Tremont
Union
Walton
Watterson-Lake
Waverly
Wilbur Wright
William Cullen Bryant
Willow
Woodland Hills

One Sub

Early Childhood Center
Louisa M. Alcott

District Will Add 174 Building Subs

CTU President Joanne DeMarco and CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett signed a settlement agreement January 27, 2006, which will bring 174 building substitute jobs to the District beginning this month.

"This was a win-win settlement for everyone involved," said DeMarco. "The CTU will get more of its laid-off members back to work in jobs with full benefits, and the District will get additional certificated staff into the K-8 buildings on a daily basis. As we all know, the more educators we have

support the academic program and provide better continuity of instruction.

The new building subs will also help to alleviate the problems with class coverage that many schools

■ continued on page 4

ESP is a GO!

by Shari Obrenski

Almost 300 CTU members have applied to participate in the Employee Separation Plan (ESP). That is well over the 150 members needed for the plan to go into effect. Both Cleveland Teachers Union and District representatives are combing the submissions to make sure that all criteria have been met. All CTU members who submitted applications will be notified over the next two weeks of their status in the plan.

Though the 278 applicants exceeds the "ceiling" of 250 set in the agreement between the CTU and CMSD, all who have met the eligibility requirements will be accepted. CTU members with 25 or more years of State Teachers Retirement System or State Employees Retirement Service credit were able to apply for the plan.

CTU members on the teacher's salary schedule will receive a lump sum payment of \$25,000 over two years. Paraprofessionals will re-

■ continued on page 4

Employee Separation Plan

WHAT'S INSIDE the Critique

UNION NEWS

OFT Endorses Strickland, Brown. 3
Grievance Update. 4
Legislative Report. 5
Mentoring Program 4

PHOTO STORIES

Holiday Party 6
Evening of Literacy. 7
Health Fair 8

OFT Endorses Fredrick for STRS



The OFT has endorsed Mark Fredrick (left) for one of two active seats on the STRS Board. OFT President Tom Mooney (right) also encouraged CTU members to support Professor John Branch of the University of Cincinnati for the other seat. Petitions are currently circulating to get their names on the ballot. STRS members will vote on these candidates later this spring.

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN



THUMBS UP to **Cheryl Neylon**, CTU's Membership Director, for her recent computer tip about getting into the ECC desktop program. Several teachers with SBC as their internet provider were having trouble accessing ECC desktop while trying to finish report cards from their home computers. Cheryl was able to get a solution from the CMSD help desk, and shared it with President DeMarco, who included it in a recent update. Thanks for the tip!



THUMBS DOWN to **Ohio Representative Jim Trakas** from House District 17 (Independence area) who recently introduced HB 473, which would eliminate tenure and create merit pay systems for teachers and certain paraprofessionals. According to OFT President Tom Mooney, Trakas' misguided bill would cut your salary in half, and then you would have a chance to "earn back" some of the rest of your pay through merit schemes, such as student achievement scores, your school's overall scores, and other variables over which you have little to no control. Unfortunately, while Ohio's lawmakers are wasting time with schemes to privatize public education, take away our bargained health care and turn it into another statewide pay-to-play scheme, and creating smoke-and-mirrors merit pay systems, they are ignoring real school issues such as funding reform. And the state of Ohio continues to sink further into educational and economic trouble. Go figure.



THUMBS UP to the staff of **Artemus Ward** for their above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty efforts to keep their school community together when structural problems forced the emergency closing of their building during winter break. The school has been relocated to Halle, one of the schools that was closed last June. Despite some initial concerns about the new location from some families, most students and staff have made the transition with relative ease and utmost professionalism.



THUMBS UP to **Kathi Vogler**, an 18-year CMSD teacher, the CTU rep from Brooklawn, and the Adult Ambassador at the 2005 Walk for Diabetes. She has been active with the Walk for the last five years, raising \$2,535 toward last year's Walk total of \$146,000. All the money raised at the Walk stays in the Cleveland/Akron area, and 78% goes to research, education and advocacy. Her team, the Walking Katz, took eighth place. Kathi teaches reading and science and by the way, she mentions, she has Type II diabetes. What a great ambassador for the District and the Union — we salute her work for this important cause.



CTU Secretary Michelle Rzucidlo-Rupright and principal Stacy Lambert-Johnson discuss teacher learning communities with speaker Dr. Dylan William.



THUMBS UP to **Barbara Byrd-Bennett** and her management team who made arrangements during last school year's and this past December's Principals Meeting for CTU building chairpersons and Executive Board members to attend with their principals. Some other systems are starting to recognize that the Union leadership can work collaboratively with administrative leadership to make positive changes in school systems. However, we believe CMSD is the first District nationwide to regularly include school-level Union leaders in these meetings. The speakers and topics have been high quality, and CTU appreciates the opportunity to share in the work of improving our schools. Thank you.



THUMBS UP to the staff of **Miles School** and their CTU rep, **Jillian Ahrens**. They used the provision in the contract to petition the CEO to come to a meeting at their school to discuss their concerns. When Interim CEO Lisa Ruda got to the meeting, not only had the staff prepared a list of problems, they also had prepared a list of possible solutions for each problem. While we are still waiting to see what the District does to help in each area, we salute the staff for being pro-active in trying to come up with their own solutions for the problems in their school.



THUMBS DOWN to the recent arbitration ruling about laid-off administrators returning to the classroom. The CTU filed a grievance about these administrators with continuing contracts returning to classroom teaching positions within their certification areas, at a time when there were teachers on the recall list in those areas. The arbitrator denied the grievance, and agreed with the District's position. The CTU has won several important arbitrations recently, but this wasn't one of them.



And last but not least, **THUMBS UP** to Cleveland's new mayor, **Frank Jackson**, a product of the Cleveland schools who knows first-hand the struggles many of our students face. In a *Plain Dealer* letter just days before his election, he pledged to make education his priority as mayor. The CTU looks forward to working collaboratively with him as partners and fellow stakeholders in improving the Cleveland Municipal School District. We are hopeful for a long, productive, successful relationship with Mayor Jackson, as we work together to achieve academic excellence in Cleveland's schools.



Continuing Contract Deadline Approaching

by Shari Obrenski

Just in case you haven't read it in recent *Critiques*, Presidential Updates, and other CTU correspondence, the deadline for applications for 2006-7 Continuing Contracts is February 24, 2006, at 5:00 p.m.

Continuing contract status, or tenure, may save your job in a layoff situation. According to the contract, all teachers on limited contract in a certification area are laid off first, before anyone with a continuing contract. If you are eligible, it is well worth your time to complete this process and apply for tenure.



Information and applications are available from your CTU Chapter Chairperson, in your school office, or at www.cmsdnet.net/jobs/. On that web-page, go to Employee Services and click on "printable forms."

The basic requirements are: 1) the employee must hold a professional, permanent, or life certificate or a five-year Professional license; 2) the employee

must either hold a Master's Degree plus six semester hours of graduate coursework in the area of licensure or in an area related to the teaching field since the initial issuance of the certificate or license, or have completed 30 semester hours of coursework in an area related to the teaching field; and 3) the employee must have taught at least three of the last five years in the Cleveland Municipal School District.

Please note that the issue date of the Five-Year Professional License of an employee converting from a provisional certificate must be no later than March 1, 2006.

Although the application has a place for your principal to sign off to recommend you for tenure (or not), the CTU has always urged employees to submit the application with or without the principal's recommendation. The CTU recently won an arbitration on this subject, and several teachers who were originally denied continuing contracts because their principals did not recommend them for various reasons were awarded continuing contract status.

If you have any questions about the application process, contact Renee Ratajczak (last names A-L) at 574-8170 or Portia Moon (last names M-Z) at 574-8692 at CMSD Employee Services.

TEACHERS ENDORSE

Strickland for Governor, Brown for U.S. Senate



U.S. Rep. Ted Strickland

The Ohio Federation of Teachers has made two endorsements for the Democratic primary scheduled for May 2 — **Ted Strickland** for Ohio Governor and **Sherrod Brown** for U.S. Senate.

“Ohio desperately needs new leadership to reverse the state’s economic and educational decline. We believe **Ted Strickland** is the person who can lead Ohio to a brighter future that is based on a strong system of education,” said OFT President Tom Mooney. “All paths to a stronger future run through creating an education system that

offers every child every opportunity for an up-to-date education. The people leading our state in the last seven years don’t get that.

“We are heartened that Ted Strickland pledges to be a law-abiding governor, which not only means avoiding ethical lapses like those committed by our present leaders, but respecting the balance of powers in our Constitution and complying with Ohio Supreme Court orders to overhaul the state’s antiquated, dysfunctional and inequitable school funding system,” Mooney said.

“This great union represents some of the hardest-working educators and educational professionals in Ohio today. I am grateful and humbled by the support given to me by the Ohio Federation of Teachers,” Strickland said. “I look forward to working with the members of OFT and all educators and educational professionals in Ohio to revitalize our education system.”

Strickland has served six terms in Congress since first being elected in 1992. During that time he served on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and in 2003 became a member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs where he is the ranking Democrat on its Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. As a member of that committee, last year he became a national leader in the fight to see that our troops have life-saving armor and equipment.

As a member of Congress from Ohio, **Sherrod Brown** has a 14-year track record of fighting for working families.

“We need to have at least one U.S. senator from Ohio who will represent the concerns of working families who need affordable health insurance coverage, and protection for their hard-earned pensions,” Mooney said. “Working Ohioans



U.S. Rep. Sherrod Brown

need a Senator who will fight to bring good paying jobs back to our state through fair trade policies.”

“Teachers and school employees need a senator who will help reform the NCLB federal education law so that it truly measures and reports academic progress in our schools, and provides help for teachers in challenging schools rather than just imposing punitive measures.”

Since voters in Ohio’s 13th Congressional District first sent him to Washington, D.C., in 1992, Brown has earned a reputation in Congress as a respected voice in health care, trade policy, job creation, education, the environment, energy policy and issues that matter to working families in northeast Ohio. He is Congress’ leading fighter for social and economic justice.

The Ohio Federation of Teachers represents more than 20,000 members in 54 local unions across the state that include public education employees, higher education faculty and support staff, and public employees.

Q: When is IPDP Time? A: ALL the Time!

by Mary Lou Prescott

OK, I know most of you have probably heard this from me many times in the past, but just for those few CMSD teachers who didn’t, let me remind you again about your Individual Professional Development Plans, also known as IPDPs.

If your license or certificate is up for renewal within the next two years, or if you plan to take ANY courses this year to count toward a future renewal or transition, you should ALREADY have an approved IPDP. What happens if you don’t? Your coursework will not count toward renewal or transition!

The Ohio Department of Education’s Certification/Licensure requirements state that your coursework must be pre-approved by your Local Professional Development Committee prior to you taking the coursework. This allows the LPDC to determine if your proposed plan and coursework meet the requirements of the licensure/certification rules.

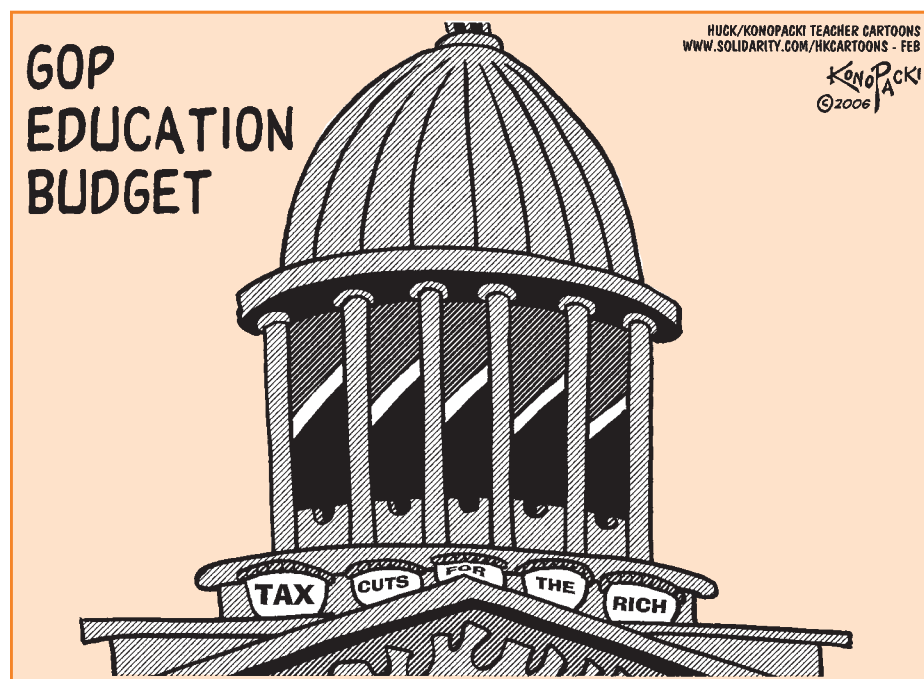
The CMSD Professional Development LPDC Handbook (available on the CMSD website) requires you to file an IPDP at least two years prior to the expiration of your current license/certificate. However, you should submit a new IPDP as soon as possible once a new license/certificate has been issued, and definitely before you take any coursework.

You can earn CEUs for educational activities, such as attending conferences, serving on committees, and developing and teaching a class outside of your classroom, among other things. But remember, if they are not pre-approved CMSD Professional Development activities, they must be accepted and approved by the Professional Development

Department, or they will not count toward your renewal/transition.

Certificates of Attendance are not CEUs. You may be able to convert some to CEUs, but this should be done as they are acquired; do not wait until you are renewing/transitioning your license or certificate.

Keep in mind that our District’s LPDC, which must approve all IPDPs, meets once a month. Depending on when you submit your IPDP, it could take two to six weeks for the Committee to review it and issue their response. And if you have any questions about this process, get the answers early. Don’t wait until the last minute. Keeping a current teaching certificate/license is your professional responsibility. If it is not renewed or transitioned on time, the District may not be able to issue you a new contract, and you could find yourself on substitute pay status, or worse, without a job.



Recalls Continue, But Slowly

by Tracy Radich & Kimberly Smith

Recalls of teachers who remain on the layoff list are continuing very slowly for open positions in the District. At presstime, the numbers were as follows: K-8 was at #595, Social Studies was at #52, and English was at #81.

All laid-off Art, Music and Physical Education teachers have been called back already.

Please advise any laid-off teachers to monitor their place on the recall list, and call Tracy Radich (extension 226) or Kimberly Smith (extension 235) at the CTU office if they have any questions.

Grievance Committee Update

by **Sandra Green**

CTU Director of Grievances

The CTU Grievance Team has won several favorable rulings lately. While we all know the grievance process can be long and sometimes arduous, I always recommend that you file a grievance if your attempts to resolve a situation at the discussion level are not successful.

Remember, you can always pull a grievance if the situation is resolved to your satisfaction. However, trying to go back later and get dates and facts together for a grievance is more difficult. The contract says we try to resolve a situation informally first, but when that fails, file a grievance.

K-8 Team Time Compensation

Earlier this school year, K-8 teachers who had lost their team period (not planning periods) were not being compensated. The CTU recently received a revised response from the CMSD stating: "Team time is an important element in the new K-8 language. Teachers should not be assigned class coverage during team time."

"However, in emergency situations where the principal must assign a teacher to cover a class during team time, the teacher will be compensated according to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The teacher will still be responsible for any missed assignments during the regularly scheduled team time."

Special Subject Teachers Acting as Substitutes

In some buildings, principals were pulling special subject teachers to cover regular classes for absent teachers. According to the contract, elementary teachers of special subjects are not to be removed from their regular assignments to function as substitutes for absent teachers.

Under Article 10, Section 11 A, "special substitute assignments shall be voluntary, as determined by the Principal consistent with the standards set by the UCC and principal at the beginning of the school year."

Principal's Recommendation on Continuing Contract Applications

The CTU won an arbitration award in January, 2006, regarding the principal's recommendation (or not) on applications for continuing contract. Several teachers had been denied continuing contracts based upon no recommendation by their principals, for various reasons. One principal felt that since this was the

teacher's first year in that building, he/she did not know the teacher well enough to make a recommendation.

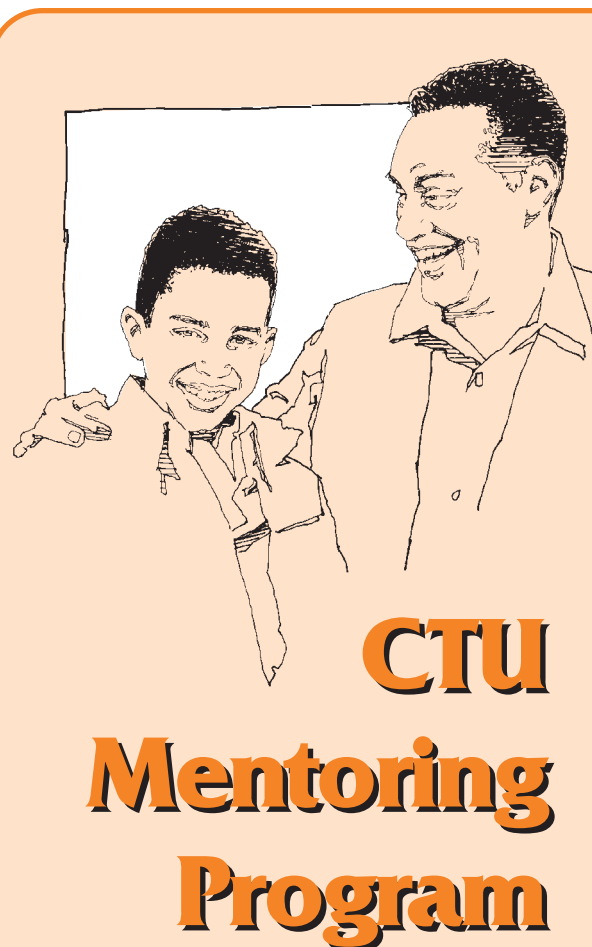
The District contended it was a "past practice" that the recommendation was needed. However, they didn't notify anyone when they kept changing the practice: one year the application said a reason must be given if the principal denied his/her recommendation, and another year's application did not even say the recommendation was required.

Arbitrator Phyllis Florman sided with the CTU, and ruled that the grievants be issued their continuing contracts for the 2005-6 school year, another arbitration victory for the CTU.

ceive a lump sum payment of \$10,500 over two years. In return, applicants had to submit an irrevocable letter of separation to the District by January 20. Most separations will be effective June 8, 2006. Those applicants with 29 years or 34 years of service credit at the end of the 2005-06 school year were able to defer their separation until the end of the 2006-07 school year.

Many members have been anxiously awaiting ESP, which is hoped will help return members on the layoff list to the classroom. President DeMarco said, "There were several reasons it took such a long time to get the ESP. One delay was that we refused to sign off on the ESP until the District agreed to include paras too."

Once the number of successful ESP participants has been determined, the District will begin to work on staffing numbers to determine how many laid-off members will be returned.



by **Wynne Antonio**

January was named as National Mentoring Month; the theme for 2006 is "Share What You Know." The CTU Mentoring Project is laboriously collaborating with both CMSD and the Cleveland City Council. Mentors could be the missing link for our students in their quest to reach their potential. Think about it. Who were your mentors? Take time to thank your mentor and then reach out to find mentors for our students.

We are targeting 7th and 8th graders to begin the program from K-8 Buildings or Middle Schools. Our members in those buildings can recommend students to become mentees.

We need mentors from throughout the Greater Cleveland Area (churches, businesses, agencies, universities). Any and all CTU members can recommend adult candidates to become mentors.

Send a list of possible candidates for mentors and a list of five students as possible candidates for mentees. The process includes applications, interviews, training, matching, orientation and monitoring.

Your support and participation is necessary to make the CTU Mentoring Project a reality for our students.

Send all information to Wynne Antonio at the CTU Office.

CMSD Will Add 174 Building Subs

■ continued from page 1

have faced in recent months. In many instances, it has been difficult to get enough day-to-day subs to cover absent teachers, to the point that scheduled professional development during school hours has been cancelled because the schools could not get enough subs.

The District used a formula based on need and size of the school to determine whether each K-8 building will get one, two or three building substitutes. The positions

will be offered to individuals on the PreK-8 recall list, then to teachers on the other recall lists (considered collectively), by seniority as defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

If a member on the recall list declines the building substitute position, this will not affect their place on the recall list (unlike declining a regular teaching position, which would result in the loss of the member's place on the recall list).

One of the best parts of this set-

tlement, according to DeMarco, is that the building substitutes will be eligible for benefits the first day of work. The benefits include health insurance, sick leave, special privilege leave, and holiday pay. They will also be paid at the highest rate of sub pay, \$151.27 per diem, beginning on the first day they work.

Building subs also attend parent/teacher conferences, staff meetings and other school-related activities to the same extent as regular classroom teachers. They attend mandatory professional days, and

are eligible to participate in voluntary professional days.

"The CTU has been relentless in our efforts to get our laid-off members back to work, especially in jobs with benefits," said DeMarco. "This settlement will give more of our laid-off teachers a chance to get back in the schools with our students, which is where they need to be."

DeMarco also praised Byrd-Bennett for her work in reaching this agreement, which will benefit both CTU and CMSD interests.

by David Quolke
Legislative Director

The Legislative Committee is in the process of contacting each building chair to recruit a LEGs Coordinator. Currently about 25 chapters have responded. Please remember to forward your LEGs coordinator to the CTU office as soon as possible.

“Hands Off Our Health Care”

Darold Johnson, OFT Political Director, indicated the Senate has appointed their members to the mandated School Employees Health Care board. He believes the House will appoint their members as early as this week. The Governor has yet to make his appointment. This board was supposed to hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study. However, the Department of Administrative Services has already awarded a contract to Watson Wyatt to conduct the report. OFT is challenging the legality of this contract. The Legislative Committee is planning an informational meeting with members, OFT representatives and legislators from our area in early

February to discuss implications and concerns.

Legislative Committee/ Political Action Report

Last week, Representative Trakas introduced HB 473 that would amend the Ohio Revised Code to require school district boards of education to establish through collective bargaining merit pay systems for classroom teachers and certain educational assistants, to eliminate continuing contracts for teachers and certain educational assistants employed by school districts and to prohibit the State Board of Education from requiring a degree higher than a bachelor’s degree or continuing education to obtain or renew an educator license for being a classroom teacher. Both the OFT and the CTU are researching the status and nature of this bill.

We are in the process of scanning candidates for the Ohio General Assembly. We have received the State House and Senate Questionnaire from OFT and will be forwarding it to announced candidates. The filing deadline is early February. We need to determine which candidates we will be interviewing prior to the March OFT Executive Council meeting for endorsements.

Job Sharing Requests

CTU is compiling a list of teachers interested in job sharing in 2006-2007. If you are looking for a job sharing partner, fill out the form below and return it to Cheryl Neylon in the CTU office by Feb 17, 2006. A list will be printed and mailed to each person who submits the form to assist him/her in finding a partner for job sharing.

Name _____ School _____
School Phone _____ Home Phone _____
Current assignment _____
Teaching preference 06-07 _____
Areas of certification _____

K-8 Schools Update

by Kurt Richards

The transition from elementary and middle schools seems to be progressing with hopes of a smooth start for the 2006-7 school year. I wish the same could be said for the current school year.

One issue that has been generating many calls to the CTU office recently is the issue of pay for team leaders, subject area specialists, special education liaisons and ESP liaisons. Some principals have been told by senior management not to pay these people in buildings that made the move from elementary to K-8 for the 2005-6 school year.

This is a clear contract violation. If you are one of the unlucky people who have been denied your wages for these positions, you may file a grievance to recover the missing wages. Also, you may be entitled to a 10% penalty for the late payment.

If you would like assistance with the contract language necessary to complete a grievance, contact your building chairperson, or call the CTU office and we will be glad to assist you.

CTU Trains New Chapter Chairs

by Michael Kulcsar and Michelle Rzucidlo-Rupright

CTU officers are helping to train new chapter chairpersons for many of the duties and responsibilities they will face in their capacity as building leaders, representatives of the Union, and protectors of the contract.

There were 22 new chapter chairpersons elected last March who have attended three all-day meetings at the CTU office during the school day. Although the CTU provides lunch and parking for the attendees, they work hard during the day learning about a variety of topics.



Michelle Rzucidlo-Rupright and Grievance Director Sandra Green.

So far the meetings have covered: how to run Union and UCC meetings; responsibilities regarding assaults, harassment, or menacing; internal CTU structure; Written Mutual Agreements; knowing the contract; what to do in a crisis; the grievance procedure; the budget; IPDPs and licensure; and election rules and procedures.

CTU directors and officers have been called in to assist in the training as appropriate to their expertise in the Union. The meetings have been organized and coordinated by Michael Kulcsar, CTU Treasurer and Bargaining Unit Director, and Michelle Rzucidlo-Rupright, CTU Secretary and Director of Strategic Planning.



Left to right: Ann Thompson (Hannah Gibbons) and Kate Kashian (Buhrer)



by Karen Dorsey-Wallenhorst

Once upon a time, we were all young children who waited with baited breath for the arrival of Santa Claus on the evening of December 24. As we grew, we slowly stopped believing in Santa (even though none of us truly wanted to stop believing) . . .



. . . As we began to have children, we once again are able to experience the joy and the excitement in waiting for Christmas but this time, we are able to experience it through the eyes of our own children or grandchildren.

The CTU Social Committee, led by Barbara Bradley Blamo, invited teachers to bring their own children or grandchildren to the Visiting Nurses Association on December 10, 2005. Our guests were greeted by John Choice and Barbara Bradley Blamo. They were able to tell Santa Claus (Fred Bickerstaff) and Mrs. Claus (Karen Dorsey-

Wallenhorst) what they wanted Santa bring them. The children were able to have their pictures taken with the Claus' photographer Elaine Leonard. (Santa Elves were Lynda Hill, Nealie McHaney-Smith and Cecelia Grooms.) As the little ones waited, they were welcomed by Joy the Clown (Joycelyn Hanson). She created fabulous designs with balloons. They were able to get their faces painted. Artists were Andrea Dockery, Diane Cooke, Chasity Hill, Alan Mintz, and Christian Osterland.

The families were entertained by Michael the Magician. After the show, the parents were able to purchase some last minute gifts from a wide variety of vendors.

After a long and exciting morning, the small guests were invited to receive goodie bags (Wynn Antonio and all), and a stocking filled with toys. (Santa Elves included Darryl Montgomery, John Scott and Lewis Camp.) This includes everyone's favorite kazoo. (I'm sure we have developed many budding musicians who find that they must practice at the most inopportune time.)

Thanks to the Social Committee, a good time was had by all!





Audrey Richardson (left) and Alexis Robinson, both of Wade Park

CMSD Students Perform in Holiday Production

“Lil’ Scrooge,” an African-American tale flavored with hip-hop, jazz, and a touch of gospel music, was performed Dec. 16-17 at Tri-C. This non-traditional adaptation of the classic tale featured young actors, dancers, and vocalists from the Cleveland area, including students from Case, John D. Rockefeller, John F. Kennedy, and Wade Park Schools. It also featured two student choreographers from Cleveland School of the Arts, and CTU First Vice President Meryl Johnson was assistant director.



Left to right: Jasmine Bankston (Gracemount), Xavier Knight (Case), and Ciera Malone (JFK)

Ashantae Shropshire (Wade Park)



Left to right: Johnny Duncan, Jr. (Wade Park), Xavier Knight (Case), Diamond Taylor (Wade Park), Ciera Malone (JFK), Janae Potts (Pinnacle Academy), Amanda Dailey (Horizon Science Academy), and Thomas Siggers (John D. Rockefeller)

Third Annual “Evening of Literacy”

by Sherdina H Williams, Nurse Chair

The weather on October 25 was frightful. But the inside of each of the three “Evening of Literacy” sites could not have been more delightful as the youngest of our children and their parents learned kindergarten readiness skills. **An Evening of Literacy** is one of our community-sponsored events. Parents of children ages 3 to 6 are encouraged to attend a 90-minute course on literacy and school readiness. While the parents studied, their children enjoy supervised learning activities, dined on pizza and were entertained by actors dressed as cartoon characters.

Parents had an opportunity to dialogue with school nurses, teachers, paraprofessionals, speech and language pathologists, audiologists and school psychologists, learning pointers on how to provide a literacy-rich home environment. CTU nurses also performed visual screenings.

An Evening of Literacy took place at three locations this year. Site coordinators were Susie Rice at Antioch Baptist church, Loretta Embry at Lee Harvard Community Center, and Sherdina Williams at Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ. A special thank you goes to Harriet Niles, for helping to secure the site locations and to Pat Gunter, for coordinating the food at all three sites. Kudos to our CTU president

Joanne DeMarco, who sat next to three 5-year-old girls who shared their unsolicited admiration for Dora the Explorer. CTU leadership remains committed to promoting literacy and closing the

educational gap within this district. As an ongoing literacy activity, CTU will sponsor 20 Family Literacy Centers. Look out for future information regarding training for these centers.





Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Health Fair was a very busy place on November 9 at East Tech.



Sign in please!

Avon Calling!



Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise Information Fair

NOVEMBER 9, 2005

This is the wheel of fortune that Liberty Mutual brought.



Kim Smith welcomes Gail to the Health Fair.



Gee! I feel like a new woman!



You are kidding — I can get all these free samples!



I'm here to make sure you take care of your teeth!



I am thrilled to be here!



Just let me straighten that back out!

WINTER HEALTH LINE TIPS

by **Beverly Smith**
Salary and Benefits Committee
Chairperson
and **LaTonya Coats**
Assistant Chairperson

Natural Way to Beat Colds

Sore Throat!

Try Bee Propolis Lozenges. Bees don't just make honey, they also make a buttery substance comprised of tree sap and beeswax that gives scratchy throats a protective waxy coat that soothes pain.

Congestion!

Try Tabasco gargle. Ever notice how salsa makes your nose run? That is because spicy foods trigger the glands in your nose to release fluids relieving congestion. Make your own spicy gargle by mixing 1-3 drops of Tabasco in one cup of water. Gargle 3-5 times a day.

Headache!

Try peppermint oil. Massaging a few drops of this aromatic oil into your temples is as effective as reducing a headache as taking 1,000 mg of acetaminophen and the scent helps relieve sinus congestion! Its smell acts directly on the brain like a drug.

Fever!

Try White Willow bark capsules. Willow bark has been used for centuries to fight fevers brought on by colds and flu, and no wonder: It contains the same active ingredient as

aspirin, salicylic acid, but won't irritate the delicate tissues lining the stomach.

Cough!

Try Horehound candies. These old-fashioned sweets contain oils from horehound plants that thin cough-causing mucus and help clear it out of your lungs.

Get out of bed faster!

Reach for elderberry extract. Flu patients who took Sambucci within 48 hours of feeling sick recovered in an average of three days. Compounds of elderberry strengthen the immune system by stimulating production of cells that fight off viruses.

Can You Hear Me Now?

DONATE YOUR OLD CELL PHONE TO THE BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER!

The drive is continuing. All donated cell phones are refurbished and given to women leaving the shelter so they will have use of a cell phone for safety.

Cell phones can be dropped off every day at the CTU office from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



CMSD Adds National Board Certified Teachers

by **Shari Obrenski**

Four Cleveland teachers joined the prestigious rank of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teachers earlier this school year. They were Janice Durkalski (Denison), certified in the area of Generalist/Early Childhood; Jaya Neal, certified in the area of Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood; Richard Skerl, Jr. (Alexander G. Bell), certified in Art/Early and Middle Childhood; and Ethan Sheils (Bolton), certified in Music/Early and Middle Childhood.

The NBPTS certification process

is a series of comprehensive performance assessments of teaching proficiency. The process includes both exams and actual classroom demonstrations. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created in 1987 on the recommendation of the Carnegie Corporation's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. Its mandate was to raise the professional status of teachers, and the quality of teaching, by creating a nationally-recognized and uniform means to identify and certify the most accomplished teachers.

The intent of the National Board program in Ohio is to promote and

reward teaching excellence. The Ohio General Assembly has established a grant program to pay the application fee for a specified number of National Board Candidates in each fiscal year, and to provide a \$2500 annual stipend to National Board Certified Teachers for up to 10 years (the length of the certificate) depending on continued legislative approval and teacher eligibility (current full-time employment as Ohio teachers). In addition, candidates who complete the National Board process receive 36 professional development credits to renew their teaching license.

The process is long, comprehensive, and difficult, and we salute these teachers who have successfully completed this outstanding achievement and received their certification.



Contact your local
Cleveland office today:

24651 Center Ridge Rd
Suite 400
Westlake, OH

Local: 440-808-0288
Toll Free: 1-800-208-3043
Fax: 440-808-0246

Exciting New Member Benefit

We are proud to announce that the Cleveland Teachers Union and Liberty Mutual Insurance Company have partnered to offer a program called Group Savings Plus®, which provides discounts on auto and homeowners insurance to Cleveland Teachers Union members.

With Group Savings Plus®, you'll enjoy:

- A group discount of 15% off our already competitive rates on auto and home insurance*
- Additional savings based on your age, driving experience, and more
- Convenient payment plans including **automatic deductions from your checking account**
- Rates guaranteed for 12 months, not six
- 24-Hour claims service and Emergency Roadside Assistance**

Call now to see just how much you can save. Then start spending your money on something a bit more exciting than auto insurance!

Special Contract Provisions for Educators

- Special Homeowner's contract provision:
Up to \$5000 of coverage for school property in employee's possession at the time of the loss.
- Special Auto contract provision:
Comprehensive deductible waived for vandalism damage to personal auto when damaged on school properly or when being used on school business.
- Homeowner's endorsement for Educators:
For approximately \$25 per year, an endorsement can be added to a teacher's homeowner's policy that extends liability coverage to the teacher's activities on the job, excluding corporal punishment.

* Figure based on an April 2004 sample of auto policyholder savings when comparing their former premium with those of the Group Savings Plus program. Individual premiums and savings will vary. Discounts, credits and program features are available where state laws and regulations allow and may vary by state. Certain discounts apply to specific coverages only. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify.

** Service applies to auto policyholders and is provided by Cross Country Motor Club of Boston, Inc., Boston, MA or through Cross Country Motor Club of California, Inc., Boston, MA. Coverage provided and underwritten by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street Boston, MA 02004. © Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. All Rights Reserved.

CTU Art Teacher Begins Blog on Internet

by **Shari Obrenski**

Jay Bloesinger, an eight-year CMSD art teacher currently teaching at Carl and Louis Stokes, has begun a blog on the internet for art teachers. The site can be accessed at www.art-lessonblog.com.

The site is intended to be used as an informational place to share ideas. Visitors can get art lesson ideas from the site, or post suggestions for lessons they have found to be successful. Direct links will be available to other useful sites, and there will be no advertisements.

"I hope this will be a way for teachers to help teachers in the field of art education," said Bloesinger. "Teachers can get ideas for specific lessons, post their own lessons, or both." He also hoped it would be useful for regular education teachers who teach their own art.



Minimum Wage

... and when we Ohioans say “minimum,” we really mean it!

■ continued from page 12

ing Ohio’s minimum wage to \$7.15, in a series of graduated raises, during the last legislative session, but the bill did not pass. Efforts to get the Republican-run General Assembly to support such an increase have been futile.

Instead, labor groups and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), an advocacy group for low-income individuals and families, are planning to bring the issue to a popular vote. Activists are now working to place a minimum wage increase on the ballot for November, 2006. They will need about 322,000 valid signatures of registered voters from

“The public is way ahead of Washington,” said Bill Samuel, legislative director of the AFL-CIO. “They see this as a matter of basic fairness, the underpinning of basic labor law in this country, and a floor under wages so we’re not competing with Bangladesh.”

Raising Minimum Wage Provides Significant Benefits to Workers

Policy Matters Ohio, a think tank dedicated to illuminating how policy decisions serve Ohio workers, analyzed a minimum wage of \$7.15 per hour. The proposal has since been revised to \$6.85, but the number of beneficiaries is likely to be similar. The initial proposal would have di-

There are only two states that set a minimum wage below the federal rate of \$5.15.



44 Ohio counties to get the initiative on the ballot.

Former Senator John Edwards, the 2004 Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, has been working with this Ohio campaign as part of his national campaign to alleviate poverty. He called the current minimum wage “a moral disgrace and a national embarrassment.”

“My view is it should be \$7.50 an hour, and I can make a great argument for it being a lot higher than that,” Edwards said. “This is a perfect example of the Republican leadership in Congress, combined with the powerful presence of lobbies in Washington, thwarting the will of the people.”

“A moral disgrace and a national embarrassment.”

— FORMER V.P. CANDIDATE
JOHN EDWARDS ON THE CURRENT
MINIMUM WAGE OF \$5.15

According to a January 2, 2006, *New York Times* article, opinion polls show wide public support for such an increase, especially since full-time wages at the federal minimum fall far short of the federal poverty level. Even Wal-Mart’s chairman endorsed an increase, stating that a worker earning minimum wages cannot afford to shop at Wal-Mart.



Poverty Line
Family of 3
\$16,900
2005 dollars

and 3) more than 75% of those affected work at least 20 hours weekly, and 35% work full-time.

The wages of these affected workers are important to their families. The lowest-earning 40% of Ohio households, with just 16% of total earnings, would get 57% of the gains from the increase. Families with employees that would be affected rely on those workers for half of the family’s earnings, on average. Over one-third rely on those family members for the entire family income.

Raising Minimum Wage Benefits Economy, Too

According to analyses by Policy Matters Ohio, there are several reasons why raising the minimum wage helps the economy. First, it is a well-targeted policy that boosts the earnings of the lowest-paid workers and reduces poverty. Second, it provides a stable floor or base for wages, and complements

other government policies.

Third, it helps government and businesses keep their part of the welfare-reform bargain in which families were encouraged to rely on work for most income. And fourth, it can provide economic stimulus during tight economic times. The reality is people at this wage level are struggling to live paycheck to paycheck, and will put most if not all of the additional income a raise would provide right back into the economy.

The conclusion of Policy Matters Ohio’s study was that an increase in the minimum wage is a crucial component of a broad-based strategy to improve the lives of Ohio’s poorest workers. Along with other anti-poverty programs, a fair minimum wage will ensure that those who work full-time in low-paying jobs will earn enough to cover basic needs.

The federal minimum wage is at an extremely low point. Many states are acting on their own to raise the minimum wage of their citizens. If Ohio followed their lead, the main beneficiaries would be working people in low-income households who rely heavily on their earnings, and who would put the additional income right back into the local economy, thus boosting the state’s economy.

Effort Has Roots in Cleveland

The crusade to raise Ohio’s minimum wage was launched at the Ohio Statehouse on November 22, 2005, led by Senator Prentiss, AFL-CIO’s Tim Burga, and Representatives Dale Miller (D-Cleveland) and Mike Skindell (D-Cleveland). They were joined by sympathetic legislators and coalition partners.

Burga said Ohio’s current minimum wage puts Ohio in a “race to the bottom” economically. Tim Ahrens, Senior Minister of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, added a moral imperative to the campaign. “There is a silent hurricane that is hitting Ohio right now, and that hurricane is poverty,”

In a Nutshell . . .

- Ohio’s minimum wage, set in 1990, is \$4.25. Only Ohio and Kansas have state minimum wages below the federal level of \$5.15 per hour.
- Some 500,000 Ohioans are working for the minimum wage, with thousands more making above minimum but below \$6.85 per hour.
- The majority (60%) of minimum wage workers in Ohio are women, and the vast majority (71%) are over age 20.
- Ohioans for a Fair Minimum Wage (a coalition of non-profit, community, faith-based, civil rights, and labor organizations) is working to place a constitutional amendment on the 2006 ballot to raise the Ohio minimum wage to \$6.85 per hour, adjusted annually for inflation.
- Some very small businesses and individuals working for family members or on a casual basis around the house — such as babysitting or lawn mowing — would be exempt from the new wage rate.
- The coalition needs to collect 322,899 signatures of registered Ohio voters by August 10 to put the issue before the voters in the November 2006 general election.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY JOANNE DEMARCO

State of the Union Report

■ continued from page 12

Brackett of the University of Cincinnati, the President of the college's local chapter of the OFT. Petitions are circulating to get their names on the ballot. Active members of STRS (not retirees) are eligible to sign the petitions; you may sign both petitions. Most importantly, be sure to vote for both candidates in the election later this spring.

Another important election will be coming this November, as Ohioans choose a new Governor and many other statewide officials. "There's light at the end of the tunnel" of Ohio's economic decline and corruption scandals, said Mooney. The OFT endorsed and is strongly supporting Ted Strickland for Governor and Sherrod Brown for U.S. Senator. Strickland is a Methodist minister and a psychologist, and understands the needs of public education in Ohio, said Mooney. Strickland will not be fooled by the for-profit charter school operators, educational predators who use Ohio kids as conduits to get state tax dollars into their own pockets. Mooney called Sherrod Brown "the strongest supporter for working people" in Ohio's House delegation.

Mooney stressed the importance of supporting lawmakers who support workers and labor by describing a bill recently introduced by Rep. Jim Trakas (R-Independence).

His bill would eliminate tenure for public school teachers, and institute a mandatory merit pay system. Under the system, you would forfeit

ing the minimum wage is an issue of social justice. Many of our students' parents are working 40 hours or more a week and still living

It will take lots of hard work to turn the state around, but this is the best opportunity labor has had in years.

about 50% of your annual salary, but have a chance to "earn it back" based on evaluations of your teaching by your students and their parents and your administrators, school-wide academic goals, district-wide goals, and test scores.

These are the kinds of issues facing public educators in Ohio. It will take lots of hard work to turn the state around, but this is the best opportunity labor has had in years to get Ohio back on track and stop the attacks on workers and on public education, and stop the state-wide decline in many areas.

The last issue Mooney discussed is very pertinent to Ohio workers, especially the working poor. State Senator CJ Prentiss is sponsoring a state-wide ballot initiative to raise the minimum wage in Ohio, which is one of only two states nationwide that do not follow the federal minimum wage.


With Cleveland ranking as one of the poorest cities in the nation, rais-

below the poverty level. Raising the minimum wage is an important way to help raise the standard of living for Cleveland and for Ohio. (Please read the related article about this



significant campaign in this issue of the *Critique*.)

The state of our state as related to union issues is struggling, but hopeful. We need to continue the long tradition of labor and join the ongoing fight for what is right for workers in this state and in the nation. Our future depends on it.



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Now That He Is Safely Dead

Now that he is safely dead
Let us praise him
Build monuments to his glory
Sing hosannas to his name.
Dead men make
Such convenient heroes: They cannot rise
To challenge the images
We would fashion from their lives.
And besides,
It is easier to build monuments
Than to make a better world.

From the poem by Carl Wendell Himes, Jr

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

said Ahrens. "This is a hurricane of seismic proportions. This, to me, is the major moral issue of our times."

Ahrens voiced his concern, shared by other faith-based groups, that current policies do not support the Bible's thousand-plus scripture passages about caring for the poor. "We are not supporting the working poor," he said. He cited the minimum wage campaign as an attempt to "change what is unjust" in our society.

Others expressed concerns about Ohio's shrinking job market, which allows wages to be suppressed and causes hardships to individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live. Burga called this a "morally correct campaign."

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks, said an increasing number of working Ohioans are unable to meet their basic needs. "No matter what job you have, you shouldn't have to

choose between heating and eating, between child care and health care."

Prentiss called for Ohio to mimic Florida, which just last year increased its state minimum wage, and 16 other states that have also increased their state minimum wage. "Public pressure will make them do the right thing" for Ohio's working poor, she added.

The advocacy group "Let Justice Roll" also coordinated various minimum wage campaign activities around the state in coordination with the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday in January.

Plan Includes Staggered Wage Raises

Ohioans for a Fair Minimum Wage commissioned a political poll in 2005, which found over 70% of Ohioans support raising the minimum wage to over \$7.00. But the group chose to begin with the first proposed raise to \$6.85 an hour beginning on January 1, 2007, if the

vote is successful. This follows the index of inflation and cost of living, according to a campaign spokesperson, and helps defray concerns by opponents, mainly restaurant and fast food employers.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce has consistently opposed any raises in the minimum wage, along with the Ohio Retail Merchants.

What You Can Do to Help

People are needed to circulate petitions for this ballot initiative. Also, retired CTU officer Michael Charney is coordinating young people 16-22 years old to work on this campaign. He has been speaking in Social Studies classes, college classes, religious youth groups, and at the NAACP Youth Council. If you would like to help circulate petitions or schedule a speaker for your class or organization, he can be contacted at 216-451-7104 or by email at michaelctu@aol.com.

In Other States . . .

- Connecticut passed HB 6228 raising the state minimum wage to \$7.40 effective January 1, 2006 and \$7.65 effective January 1, 2007.
- Hawaii legislators passed SB 294, raising the state minimum wage to \$6.75 effective January 1, 2006 and \$7.25 effective January 1, 2007.
- Maryland passed HB 391 to establish a state minimum wage of \$6.15, but the measure was vetoed by the Governor.
- Minnesota passed HB 48 raising the state minimum wage to \$6.15 effective August 1, 2005.
- New Jersey passed SB 2065 which increased their minimum wage to \$6.15, and the bill was signed into law by the Governor on April 14, 2005.
- Wisconsin increased the minimum wage to \$5.70 effective June 1, 2005 and \$6.50 in October, 2005, through an executive order from the Governor.
- Proposals were also introduced or pending in 1995 in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.



THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY JOANNE DEMARCO

State of the Union Report: Strong and Hopeful



“The fight continues, but there may finally be light at the end of the tunnel,” OFT President Tom Mooney told CTU officers, building chairpersons and delegates at the January 26 Delegate Assembly at the Visiting Nurses’ Association Hall. Mooney addressed five critical issues facing Ohio educators.

“The tide is beginning to turn” in the charter school issue, he reported. “The Justices and legislators read the news,” and are beginning to see the educational and financial scam that, for the most part, is Ohio’s charter school program. Thanks to efforts of the Coalition for Public Education (OFT and CTU are charter members), Ohio legislators have recently capped the number of charter schools and sponsors. Charter schools leech millions of dollars away from public school systems. Just this school year, Ohio will take \$425 million in state and local taxes away from traditional public schools to pay the operators of charter schools, despite their dismal academic performance.

The Coalition continues its efforts to limit the growth of for-profit charter schools, and to bring more accountability to those in existence.

The “Hands Off Our Health Care!” campaign is working to stop the state law (yes, this train is moving, and we need to stop it now!) to put all public education employees into a state-controlled, state-mandated health care plan. This provision was stuck in last year’s budget bill, and is in effect. Mooney called this plan the “Wal-Mart health plan,” and warned educators we will pay more for less coverage.

A Board has been appointed to develop the mandatory plan, a Board that was appointed by Ohio

politicians, a Board with **no** teachers or school board members on it. This Board will select **everything** about our **mandatory** health care plan: carriers, co-pays, participating hospitals and doctors, what’s covered, coverage limits, etc. It will amount to about **\$2 billion** of our annual health care dollars to be spent at the discretion of political appointees. This will create another pay-to-play political situation, and our health care costs and coverage are at stake in this game.

There is one more vote of the Ohio legislature that can stop this plan. **All** public education employees — teachers, paras, administrators, clerks, custodians, and all other employee groups — need to contact their state lawmakers **now**, to tell them to put a stop to this plan that takes away our right to collectively bargain for our health care coverage.

You can go to the Statehouse link on the OFT website at www.oft-aft.org to contact your legislators. Do this today! Your health care coverage as you know it is in jeopardy.

Some important elections are coming up later in 2006. The first one will be the STRS election for

two active teacher seats, which will take place this spring. After the financial fiascos that took place with our STRS monies in the past decade, OFT decided we need to be more involved on the STRS Board. Last spring OFT-endorsed candidates won two open seats on the Board, and we are trying to do the same this year.

The OFT has endorsed Mark Fredrick, a Cleveland teacher at Max Hayes High School and a CTU chairperson, and Professor John

■ continued on page 11

What’s the Matter with Ohio?

CAMPAIGN SEEKS TO RAISE Minimum Wage

Did you know there are only two states that set their minimum wage level below the federal level of \$5.15 per hour? One is Kansas, and the other, sadly, is Ohio. And even at the federal minimum wage of \$5.15, a full-time worker at that minimum wage brings in only \$10,712 a year, just two-thirds of the federal poverty line for a family of three.

The federal government has not raised the minimum wage since 1997, but the issue has seen intense activity in state legislatures in the past year. Thirteen states and Washington D.C. now have mini-

mum wages above the federal level, two states have approved wages above the federal level that have not yet taken effect, and in two others, increases might occur (ballot issues pending).

The minimum wage in Ohio has been \$4.25 an hour since 1991, and applies to small employers, some farms and most restaurants. Workers at larger enterprises generally make the federal minimum wage.

Increasing Ohio’s Minimum Wage

Senator CJ Prentiss (D-Cleveland) proposed rais-

■ continued on page 10

THE CRITIQUE

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