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### AFA Dinner at Riggio's . . .



AFA Dinner, October 2, 2011

Dont't miss the AFA dinner, Sunday April 1 at 4:30 P.M. at Riggio's Pizzeria. 7530 W. Oakton Avenue (at Milwaukee) in Niles.

Free for AFA members. Mix with your fellow adjuncts. Spouses/guests are \$20 at the door. You'll receive your invite in your mailbox, and prizes will be given out at the dinner.

Joining the AFA is easy and a mere \$10.00. Contact Cheryl Brown for membership at [cbrown@oakton.edu](mailto:cbrown@oakton.edu) or go to [oaktonafa.org](http://oaktonafa.org) and download the form..

### The 158th Illinois Education Association-NEA Representative Assembly meets March 14th thru March 17, 2012 . . .

Some 1,200 delegates who represent us will meet at the Hilton Chicago. The meeting is the culmination of a yearlong effort to ensure that members' needs and interests are integrated into the daily workings of the organization.

Initially, delegates attend open hearings where they gather crucial information on issues facing the association. The days following are spent conducting business and making policy, including the all-important discussions on how your dues dollars will be spent.

Each IEA-NEA region is allotted delegates on a formula of one delegate per 100 members. It is important that we all are members so we have full representation.

To further understand the Representative Assembly, visit [www.ieanea.org](http://www.ieanea.org) for a short video on representative activities as well as an overview of delegate responsibilities..

### From the Desk of our President, Barbara Dayton . . .



Would you be interested in serving on an IEA committee? Every year the president of IEA makes new appointments based on recommendations from local presidents.

Examples of committees are: Bylaws and Resolutions, Human and Civil Rights, Leadership Training Institute, Legislative, Retirement Security, etc.

Service may include a trip or two to Springfield. If so, all expenses will be paid. Contact **Barbara Dayton** at [B3T2@aol.com](mailto:B3T2@aol.com). This is a wonderful way to see what happens at the state level and meet new and interesting people.

### From our Grievance Chairman, Beverly Stanis . . .



It's that time of year again! Craig Ahrndt of Human Resources sent the Commitment Letter to all Adjuncts who have worked for twenty-two semesters or more. If you are in that category and intend to teach next year, please make certain that you have filled out this form and sent it back to your department chair. This form provides important protections for our adjuncts with the most seniority.

Also, the preference sheets should be sent soon or are already in your in boxes. The preference sheet should be filled out completely and returned to your department chair within two weeks of receipt. Be certain to indicate all of your availability. If you limit the times, places and/or courses that you are willing to teach, then your department chair may not be able to provide you with the number of classes that you want. Preference sheets, by contract, are to be sent no later than three months prior to the start of the next semester. Failure to timely return your time sheet can result in a lack of

assignments for the following semester. These forms provide protection to all of our adjuncts. Remember to keep a receipt to prove that the form was sent and when it was sent.

Remember that the job of department chair is not an easy one. The chair pleases one person and makes another unhappy. Appreciate the time constraints that the chair is working under and send these forms as soon as possible.

Just a little over a year remains on our current contract. Please review the contract. If you have suggestions for changes that can be attempted by negotiation, please send them to any of our board members (board members are listed on the newsletter).

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### Strategies for being a better teacher. . . by Jackie McNeilly

When I started teaching at Oakton, my only training came from training in Great Books and religious instruction to children. I took a Toast Master course to become a better lecturer for my business which also helps at Oakton. I took courses at Oakton to advance in my field of computer graphics and I observed the good techniques my instructors used and applied them to my own classes. For example, on the first day I make up a name plate for each student and ask them to keep it on their desks until I can learn their names. Then I make a strong effort to memorize their names. This goes a long way to keeping them in class and working to their capacity. I also ask them to fill out a form with their name, address, email, occupation, goals for the class and a release for any of their art I might publish for the college. They then introduce themselves to the class and give their occupation and goals. A few weeks into the class I review their goals to see if I am meeting their goals.

Oakton has a rich faculty development program. Many courses are specifically designed to enhance our teaching skills. In the course *Classroom Success* I learned to integrate games into my curriculum. The course *Mapping the Brain: The Brain and Learning* taught me the importance of food and rest on learning. I also learned how different people learn and when it is the best time to introduce new work. I learned how to handle students with special needs. I can't say enough about this course. Taking *Problem Based Learning* made me redesign the way I taught a very difficult technical subject to artsy students with great success.

I volunteer in the art room at a K-5 grade school three times a week and I learned how much music helps the students relax and work at their peak. Now I have students at Oakton bringing me music to play while they work. At this school I also learned a different way of asking questions to assess the progress of my students. I now ask, "Raise your hand if you have finished this task." I can then immediately see who needs help and whether enough of the students have finished the task for me to progress to the next step.

I am a people person, so it is natural for me to care a lot about my students and I get genuinely excited when they do good work. But, at the same time, can I feel for the personal problems challenging my students; the student who freezes on a test; the mentally and physically challenged. The bottom line is that when we care about our students as people they grow and gather confidence. We grow too.

I don't know everything and especially since I teach computer graphics keeping up to date is a full time job. So I tell my students, "If you know something I don't know, please tell me and the class. We will all benefit from it." As a result, I learn something major each semester.

This is our goal: To empower our students to achieve skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities.

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### Crowdsourcing a Compilation of Adjunct Working Conditions

Feb. 1, Michael Bérubé, president of the Modern Language Association and new-found hero of contingent faculty everywhere, published the essay "Among the Majority" on the MLA website. The piece is a reflection on the New Faculty Majority's 2012 Summit he attended last weekend in Washington, DC, as well as a recap of some of the MLA's recently-released recommendations for fair standards concerning non-tenure track faculty. In the essay, Bérubé specifically cites this beauty of a quote:

Following a review of best practices in various institutions, the MLA recommends minimum compensation for 2011-12 of \$6,800 for a standard 3-credit-hour semester course or \$4,530 for a standard 3-credit-hour quarter or trimester course. These recommendations are based on a full-time load of 3 courses per semester (6 per year) or 3 courses per quarter or trimester (9 per year); annual full-time equivalent thus falls in a range of \$40,770 to \$40,800.

Almost \$7K per course! Most adjuncts have never seen anything close to that figure. Mr. Bérubé says he personally has taught at schools that pay right at or below \$2000 maximum per course. Feel free to do the math on that one (Hint: a 5/5 pays \$20,000 annually). You can be a terrible human being and still recognize that a full-time teacher should earn much more than that. Just in case you're not familiar with the usual procedure, full-time professors generally teach much less than 10 courses per year. Some teach as few as three. The MLA's recommendation is based on the assumption of a 3/3 teaching load, which sounds about perfect. He ventures to say most adjuncts would agree. Three courses per semester is ideal because it allows teaching to be the primary focus (as it should be), and it also permits some time for research and professional development. So, about \$40,000 a year. That isn't too much to ask. Especially considering all adjuncts have advanced degrees in their fields.

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### Labor Notes Conference by Joe Berry

May 4-6, 2012 Chicago, Illinois

Labor Notes conferences are the biggest gatherings of grassroots union activists, worker center leaders, and all-around troublemakers out there—and this time we're in Chicago! Register at <http://labornotes.org> by March 2 for a big discount. Don't miss a weekend of inspiration, education and agitation.

Join thousands of union members, officers, and grassroots labor activists who are on the front lines in our workplaces, our unions, and our communities. Meet troublemakers from around the country and around the world.

More than 100 meetings and workshops include contract campaigns, creative organizing tactics, beating apathy, running for local union office, bargaining over technology, understanding the economy, and reviving the strike.

Labor Notes' key slogan is "Putting the Movement back into the Labor Movement" and that is what we have been doing in our not-so-little corner of the faculty and teacher union movement

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### Congratulations Peg Lee . . .

for being selected as one of 2012's "Most Powerful and Influential Women of Illinois" by the National Diversity Council. This annual award recognizes women "who have the tenacity it takes to excel in their field of expertise." Peg will receive her honor on March 15 at the Illinois Women's Conference in Chicago.