



Merry Christmas

Executive Directors Report

This year has been one of many different emotions.

Uncertainty - as employee turnover has kept us from communicating as effectively and often with our members as we need and has slowed the delivery of service to some. I am still sure that our delivery of service is better than most companies and far better than the competition.

Grief - when we learned that two of our members were shot and one of their co-workers killed in the school shooting in Campbell County. This incident has taken the focus of PET to the changes which need to be made from Federal law to local and individual school policy. I can think of few things which have torn at me so deeply. We are actively seeking any ideas and input which can make our schools safer for our children and educators. The coalition is coming together and we all have ideas – but, I want to see eve-

ryone's ideas.

Satisfaction – in the results of our annual survey which shows that our members are still in agreement with those basic tenants under which PET has operated on for these past 15 years. You have given us the knowledge that we are serving and representing you well. It is important to me that the great majority of our members agree with our mix of service and price.

Loss – at the separation caused by death, retirement, moving away or resignation of our members. Most of you probably do not know that the board and staff look at PET as a big extended family. Meetings are often more like family reunions than places to conduct business. If you have never attended a PET event, I ask you to give it a try. Most members who attend once do come back.

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Shop Till You Drop and Give to PET

That's right. Or at least until your finger falls off. When you enter shopping sites like Ebay and Amazon through the PET Mall on the PET website, you will be helping to support

the PET Foundation. For every dollar you spend, these companies will give a donation to help the PET Foundation provide scholarships, grants and other good works.

*“Teachers
By
Calling...”*

*Professionals
By
Choice!”*

*“Your
Professional
Alternative”*

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A Word From PET President Kathy A. Kolb

The Ultimate Sacrifice

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Members can help keep the publication coming on a regular basis by submitting articles and ideas. We welcome submissions by letter, email, and computer disk in .doc files.

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As the holiday season comes and goes, it is my hope that we all focus on the act of giving. Families will gather to celebrate their love for one another. Many presents, large and small, will be opened.

The greatest gift--sacrifice-- has already been given as we remember our armed forces in various locations around the world.

Some will celebrate the Christmas season in places other than their homes and without their families. Some may never be able to celebrate again because of that sacrificial giving. In our last newsletter, I spoke of

honor and how vital it was to us as a nation to preserve it and protect it. Our soldiers have that duty, but we teachers have that responsibility as well.

Three of our precious administrators in Campbell Co. exemplified this duty of honor and sacrificial giving to protect fellow teachers, students, and members of that school's community. One of those administrators gave the ultimate sacrifice. While we participate in all of the holiday festivities, let us stop for a moment and thank those individuals for their selfless acts of giving.

Regents Approve Students' 'Bill of Rights'

Students at Tennessee's public colleges and universities can speak their minds without fear of retaliation from professors, but they still must learn their assignments under student protections adopted by the Tennessee Board of Regents system on Friday.

"Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom," according to the student bill of rights.

"The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, ... (but) students should exercise their freedom with responsibility," the policy said.

The policy, adopted during a two-day Regents meeting at Walters State Community College in Morristown, affects some 180,000 students attending the Board of Regents' six universities, 13 two-year colleges and 26 technology centers.

The action follows similar moves to formally affirm student rights at the 42,000-student University of Tennessee system and nation-

ally.

"The professor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression," the policy says, while "student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards."

Students can disagree with the views offered in class, but they still "are responsible for learning the content" and for "maintaining standards of academic performance."

"It gives us the opportunity to express our opinion," Darion Eastman, a junior at Tennessee State University in Nashville, told The Tennessean newspaper. "We can all have opinions, and everyone can say what it is that they feel."

Regents officials said individuals schools may have their own policies that cover certain issues not mentioned in the overall policy, such as plagiarism. Tennessee Board of Regents: <http://www.tbr.state.tn.us/>

Freedom of Access to Higher Education

The admissions policies of each Tennessee Board of Regents institution are a matter of institutional choice, provided that each institution makes clear the characteristics and expectations of students which it considers relevant to success in the institution's program.

Under no circumstances should a student be

barred from admission to a particular institution on the basis of race. Thus, within the limits of its facilities, each institution should be open to all students who are qualified according to its admissions standards. The facilities and services of a TBR institution should be open to all of its enrolled students

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Views From the Bench

Court Decisions From Around the Country which Effect Teachers, Students and Communities



California Parents Will Ask for Rehearing

Palmdale, CA - At the request of seven California parents, Liberty Counsel, a public interest policy organization, has agreed to become lead counsel in a case that shocked the nation last week. In *Fields v. Palmdale School District*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that parental rights to direct the upbringing of their children stop at the "threshold of the school door."

The parents in *Fields* objected to a survey given to their children at Mesquite Elementary School. The survey was administered and developed by Kristi Seymour. Ms. Seymour volunteered at the school as a "mental health counselor" while enrolled in a master's degree program at California School of Professional Psychology. The survey asked children aged seven to ten about the frequency of: "Touching my private parts too much," "Thinking about having sex," "Thinking about touching other people's private parts," Thinking about

sex when I don't want to," "Not trusting people because they might want sex," "Getting scared or upset when I think about sex," "Having sex feelings in my body," and "Can't stop thinking about sex."

Writing for the court, Judge Reinhardt, the same judge who ruled against the Pledge of Allegiance, stated that parents do not have a "right to compel public schools to follow their own idiosyncratic views as to what information the schools may dispense." The court stated that parents have no constitutional right "to prevent a public school from providing its students with whatever information it wishes to provide, sexual or otherwise, when and as the school determines that it is appropriate to do so." The court ruled that the only choice parents have is whether to enroll their children in public

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Court Rules Against Special Ed. Parents

High Court Rules That the Burden of Proof Falls to Parents

The Supreme Court ruled last month that parents who demand better special education programs for their children have the burden of proof in the challenges.

The 6-2 decision, written by retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, said that if parents challenge a program, they have the burden in an administrative hearing of showing that the program is insufficient. If schools bring a complaint, the burden rests with them, O'Connor wrote.

The ruling is a loss for a Maryland family that contested the special education program designed for their son with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The case required the court to interpret the Individuals With Disabilities Act, which does not specifically say whether parents or schools have the burden of proof in disputes. The family's attorney, William Hurd, unsuccessfully argued that when there are disagreements between schools and parents, education officials have better access to relevant facts and witnesses.

Chief Justice John Roberts had recused himself from the case, because attorneys from his old law firm represented the school district.

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer wrote separate dissents.

ABOUT THE PET FOUNDATION

In 1998 the Professional Educators of Tennessee formed a foundation for the purpose of receiving, administering and expending funds for purposes relating to education including:

- Educational Research and Professional Development
- Grants and Mini Grants to teachers for special projects
- Scholarships to current students and teachers wishing to further their education
- Community projects which benefit parents, students and teachers

"PET itself is a professional association of more than 3000 like-minded educators across the state. Members believe they can best serve the children and community by focusing on education in a positive collaborative way.

Send your donations to PETF, P.O. Box 1175, Columbia, TN 38402

Donations to the PET Foundation are tax deductible

"How could your put a mini-grant to good use next year?."

START PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR, NOW!

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Show Me the Money

Grants, Scholarships, Fellowships and other Funding Sources Available to Teachers and Schools Systems

"Youth Service America and Disney are offering the Disney Minnie Grants"

This grant program is designed for youth across the globe to engage them to implement service projects on National & Global Youth Service Day, April 21-23, 2006. Maximum Award: \$500. Eligibility: youth (ages 5-14), or teachers, schools and organizations that oversee them. Deadline: January 13, 2006.

http://www.ysa.org/awards/award_grant.cfm#nowavailable

"Funding for Hands-on Environmental Projects"

The Captain Planet Foundation funds hands-on environmental projects for to encourage youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities.

Maximum Award: \$2500. Eligibility: Schools and non-profits. Deadline:

December 31, 2005.

http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/aboutUs.html#policies_grant_guidelines

"State Farm Charitable Contributions to Teacher Excellence Programs"

The State Farm Companies Foundation makes charitable contributions to teacher excellence programs that improve teacher quality, service-learning programs that integrate core classroom curriculum with service to the community, and programs that incorporate the Baldrige criteria (for information, see website) into education systems to improve overall effectiveness. Maximum Award: Varies. Eligibility: nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, Canadian charitable organizations, and educational institutions. Deadline: January 15, 2006.

<http://www.statefarm.com/foundati/foundati.htm>

"American Library Association & NEH"

The "We the People Bookshelf" program encourages young people to read and understand great literature while exploring themes in American history. Public and school (K-12) libraries are invited to apply to be among the 1,000 libraries selected to receive free books. Deadline: January 17, 2006

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/wethepeople/wepeople.htm>

"National School and Business Partnerships Award"

The National School and Business Partnerships Award supports and recognizes the efforts of schools and businesses that partner to improve the academic,

social or physical well-being of students. Maximum Award: \$10,000. Eligibility: Partnerships involving kindergarten through 12th grade public schools and/or school districts and businesses. Deadline: January 30, 2006. <http://www.corpschoolpartners.org>

"MathMovesU Grants and Scholarships Program"

Raytheon Company has launched the MathMovesU Grants and Scholarships Program to reward real-life "Math Heroes" for their dedication to improving math education and their inspiration of participation in math. Maximum Award: \$2,500. Eligibility: full-time teachers currently employed and teaching a mathematics curriculum at a middle school or high school in the U.S. Deadline: February 15, 2006.

<http://www.mathmovesu.com/grants.html#hero>

"Stimulating Interest in Careers in Fisheries Science and Management"

The Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program is designed to stimulate interest in careers in fisheries science and management among groups underrepresented in the fisheries professions, including minorities and women. Students (Grades 10-12) spend 8 weeks in the summer working alongside their mentor who is a fisheries professional in their local community. Maximum Award: Participants receive a \$3,000 scholarship paid out in 6 installments over the summer months. Eligibility: all sophomore, junior, and senior high school students regardless of race, creed, or gender. Because the principal goal of the program is to increase diversity within the fisheries professions, preference will be given to qualified women and minority applicants. Deadline: February 15, 2006.

"Show Me the Money: Tips & Resources for Successful Grant Writing"

Many educators have found that outside funding, in the form of grants, allows them to provide their students with educational experiences and materials their own districts can't afford. Learn how they get those grants -- and how you can get one too. Included: Practical tips to help first-time grant writers get the grants they need. http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml



Joy – as new memberships poured in this year at a faster pace than we can ever remember and yes that means that membership is increasing. Joy when we receive word of honors our members have received and find out that some of those who have moved out of state in the past are coming back. I have had the joy of sharing in the startup or reforming of several locals this year where our members were excited, energetic and looking forward to sharing PET with their colleagues. But, I would say the greatest joy is in sharing with members the miracle of the birth of their children.

Disappointment – as a local unit decided that no one really wanted to be a leader and would just rather be members of PET. That is disappointing because it is a step backward for us, but it is a greater disappointment in that it shows the other sides tactics of intimidation are working on some of our members.

Peace – in the knowledge that we are going in the right direction. We are making a difference. We are being listened to and are being asked for our help. Peace that we are running our association honestly and truthfully and we are not beholding to anyone. We can represent our members and at the same time be helping the children. We can work for both that is a great difference in a union and a professional association.

Thankfulness – that I get to deal with the best group of people I know. The staff at the PET office, the

Board of Directors, our local leaders, our associates at Association of American Educators and Christian Educators Association International, those who work with us to keep our insurance program the best available, the leadership at the other state independent organizations and our members. I am so thankful for your participation as members in PET.

Pride – as I met with the US Secretary of Education and was assured that we were appreciated and our suggestions were making a difference. Pride when members of the legislature come and tell you they would be glad to sponsor your legislative efforts. Pride when members of the Congress tell you their door is always open to you and mean it. They say pride is a sin and that it goes before a fall. I want you to understand that this pride is not in myself. The pride I have is in PET and in where we have come from (five in one school) to where we are now. It is easy for me to admit that it was not my great skills which have brought us thus far. Together we have grown and will continue to positively bring education to the point where it is better for the students and the educators than ever before in Tennessee. I may not see it but some of you will.

Sincerity – as I wish you all a Blessed Christmas (or Chanukah) and a most Happy and Rewarding 2006.

(continued from page 3, California Parents...)

In the school. Once in school, the parents have no authority over what their children are taught. The school, according to the court, can teach the children *anything*, short of committing treason.

Mathew D. Staver, President and General Counsel of Liberty Counsel, commented: "The parents feel like their children were mentally raped when they were subjected to embarrassing and inappropriate sexually explicit materials. Americans will be stunned to learn that parental rights stop at the threshold of the school door. In the court's opinion, it's okay to teach kindergartners to use condoms or to tantalize youngsters with pornographic materials. Anything, at anytime, for any grade is fine. The court said that the only constitutional restriction is that the school may not commit treason! Such a ruling is unthinkable."

(Continued from page 2, Freedom of Access...)

In the Classroom

The professor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

1. Protection of Freedom of Expression

Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

2. Protection Against Improper

Academic Evaluation

Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

3. Protection Against Improper Disclosure

Certain information about students is protected from public disclosure by federal and state laws. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances.

The Legislative Report

Legislative Calendar

- **January 10, 2006** The General Assembly will convene for a special session to work on ethics legislation. Whatever they pass will likely go into effect immediately. They will adjourn the special session.
- **January 16, 2006** The regularly scheduled 104th general assembly will reconvene to handle new business.

Education Committee Members

Senate

Jamie Woodson, Chair; Don McCleary, Vice Chair; Jim Tracy, Secretary

Jim Bryson, Charlotte Burks, Rusty Crowe, Ward Crutchfield, Steve Cohen, Bill Ketron

House

Les Winningham, Chair; Tommie Brown, Vice Chair; Joe Towns, Secretary;

Harry Brooks, Barbara Cooper, Steve Godsey, Dolores Gresham, Beth Harwell, John Hood, Ulyses Jones, Jr., Sally Love, Mark Maddox, Gerald McCormick, Richard Montgomery, Eric Swafford, Larry Turner

Visit the PET Website and go to Legislation to track and research bills. Info upcoming on PET's bill info.



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