



# MONTANA PROFESSIONAL TEACHING FOUNDATION

December 2011 Newsletter

Promoting Great Teaching in Montana

## Teaching: not for the faint of heart

This November, many of us at the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation had the opportunity to preview a new documentary film called "American Teacher" at a special screening in Helena.

The film documents the realities of teaching in this nation by following the stories of several public school teachers. It portrays the long hours, low salaries, extraordinary commitment to children, and passion for their work that characterize so many teachers.

In short, teaching is not a job for the faint of heart.

At the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation, we are proud to support Montana's public school teachers in the essential work they do for our children and our nation's future. Our foundation works to bolster the profession, encourage top-quality teaching, and give heart to our hard-working teachers.

We could not do this important work without your support. Thank you!

Eric Feaver, Chair



MONTANA PROFESSIONAL TEACHING FOUNDATION  
1232 E 6th Ave  
Helena, MT 59601  
406.447.1479

Banner photos:  
Nathan Ham/NEA



Alana Listoe photo, Helena IR

2012 Montana Teacher of the Year Tom Pedersen talks to his Honors Biology students about documenting their water quality observations at Gould Creek near Helena.

## MPTF honors 2012 Montana Teacher of the Year

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation's top goal is to promote and honor excellent teaching and learning in Montana's k-12 schools. That's why the foundation sponsors and administers the Montana Teacher of the Year program. Each year, the program honors a Montana teacher who exemplifies the best in the teaching profession. It's the highest honor a Montana teacher can achieve.

This September, Helena science teacher Tom Pedersen was named Montana Teacher of the Year for 2012. Pedersen has devoted 35 years of his life to teaching science at Capital High School in Helena. He currently teaches Honors Biology II (a dual-credit anatomy and physiology class through the University of Montana) and Science Seminar.

Pedersen says he aims to motivate students "to become life-long learners, passionate about this planet, and to stay curious, motivated, and filled with a sense of wonder." "He teaches much more than science," says his principal, Elisabeth Hudnutt. "He teaches students how to become contributing members of society and critical thinkers and voters." Many of Pedersen's former students have gone on to become doctors, nurses, chemists, and biologists.

Pedersen believes in getting students out into the natural world. His Honors Biology II students work in the field monitoring water quality and forest health. They also learn to listen and read at the college level, working on high-tech DNA and human physiology and anatomy labs.

His Science Seminar students tackle cutting-edge science issues and learn the Socratic method, where they are encouraged to question any viewpoint or guest

(Continued on page 2)

## 2011 Montana Educator Forum one of the largest ever

Nearly 175 educators and policy makers attended MPTF's Montana Educator Forum this year, making it one of the largest ever.

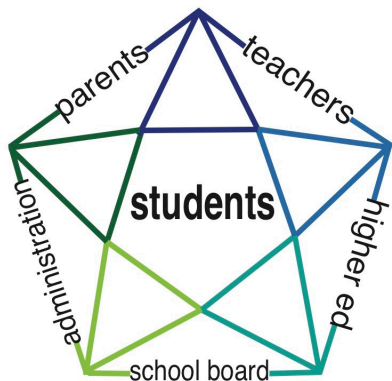
With the theme "**Building Relationships That Work: A Bridge to Student Success**," the forum showcased Montana k-12 schools that have built successful and innovative partnerships between students and their schools, between administrators and teachers, between schools and teacher preparation programs, and between schools and parents.

The forum provides a unique opportunity for educators to share their perspectives and success stories with colleagues from around the state.

School districts from around Montana sent teams of administrators, trustees, and teachers to attend the forum. And for the first time, future teachers from the University of Montana Dept. of Education attended, sponsored by the department and Beach Transportation, which provided a free bus.

**Here are some comments** from this year's forum participants:

- "I gained perspective, hope, and motivation as an educator! It was great."
- "I loved to see teachers, postsecondary students, administrators, board members, MEA-MFT, etc., all together working for student achievement."
- "In a time of such intense focus on standards, failure rates, test scores, etc., this was extremely refreshing! Positive student relationships [already are] my main focus, but these new ideas and reminders were helpful and insightful."
- "I especially liked talking to other teachers and districts about what's working for them and why. It's always nice to get additional tips from the trenches."



## Teacher of the Year (from p. 1)

speaker as long as they do it respectfully. The class culminates in field trips to Glacier and Yellowstone national parks and Lewis & Clark Caverns.

Pedersen sees nature as an antidote to the symptoms of "nature deficit disorder" in kids: anxiety, stress, ADHD, obesity, depression, and suicide. "Kids who spend five to eight hours a day in front of a screen or text thousands of messages are not getting outside," he said. Time in nature, he added, can calm, focus, and relax students and make their education relevant and fun.

**As Montana Teacher of the Year**, Pedersen will serve as an ambassador for the teaching profession and represent Montana in the National Teacher



*From left: finalist Beth Thomas, 2012 Teacher of the Year Tom Pedersen, and finalist Amy Konen were honored at the foundation's annual Teacher of the Year celebration in October.*

of the Year Event. **Finalists** in the 2012 Montana Teacher of the Year event are Amy Konen, a literacy, math, and reading intervention teacher at Mountain View Elementary in Great Falls, and Beth Thomas, a science teacher at North Middle School in Great Falls. Pedersen, Konen, and Thomas all were honored at a Montana Professional Teaching Foundation celebration October 20, 2011, in Missoula.

**Congratulations** to these outstanding teachers!

## Paul Andersen named National Teacher of the Year finalist

Congratulations to Paul Andersen, 2011 Montana Teacher of the Year, who was chosen as one of four finalists in this year's National Teacher of the Year program! Andersen teaches science at Bozeman High School.

## Karen Cox Memorial Grants: a little goes a long way

With today's tough economy and school funding cuts, k-12 teachers are spending more of their own money than ever on supplies and learning experiences for their students. The foundation's Karen Cox Memorial Grants were created to help educators who raid their own bank accounts to enrich their students' learning. The grants are named in honor of Karen Cox, an outstanding Billings teacher who lost her life working to improve public education. The maximum grant is \$500, a modest amount that can go a long way.

This year's Karen Cox Memorial Grant winners include the following:

**Cheryll Amen, 2nd grade teacher, Orchard Elementary, Billings.** Research shows young readers need to hear expert reading modeled every day, says Amen. But her students are in the lowest socioeconomic bracket and receive little or no reading support at home. With her grant, Amen will set up listening centers so students can hear good reading and practice independently. The grant will purchase CD players, headphones, and read-along CDs to supplement current reading instruction in her classroom.

**Abby Stitt, 3rd-4th grade combined teacher, Potomac School, Bonner.** Stitt's grant will allow her school to buy applications for 15 iPads. She explains: The Pages application allows the iPad to become a word processor. Meteor Math helps students master math facts. Geographia teaches states and capitals, and National Geographic World Atlas provides access to outstanding world maps.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Karen Cox grants (from p. 2)

**Angie Sinrud, K-8 Explore School teacher, Helena Public Schools.** Explore School brings homeschool students into the public school district for science education. The program works to meet the needs of students with various learning styles, since learning style differences may be part of the reason kids are homeschooled, Sinrud says. Her grant will help purchase science equipment for the program.



The late Karen Cox

**Susie Kenison, 1st grade teacher, Ridge View Elementary, Belgrade:** To become good readers, children need to spend time daily with engaging books they can read successfully. “But many families don’t have appropriate books at home for early readers,” says Kenison. With school funding cuts, she has to spend her own money on books for her classroom. Kenison’s grant will buy books from the Take Home Reading Program,

bringing her students an extensive selection of quality books at their reading level.

**Lauree Saylor, K-5 music teacher, Florence Carlton Elementary, Florence.** Saylor’s grant will purchase special construction paper for students to make masks for a school-wide event that weaves art, reading, writing, speaking, and music, using Hanneke Ippisch’s *Spotted Bear, A Rocky Mountain Folktale* as a theme. Students will present their masks, stories, poems, and songs at a community event. “In this day of rigorous test taking, this activity will allow students to participate in higher level thinking skills and creativity,” Saylor says.

**Amanda Howland, 2nd grade teacher, Orchard Elementary, Billings.** Second grade teachers at Orchard are “eager to widen our students’ interest in writing,” says Howland. “However, classroom materials are very limited.” Her grant will give teachers access to a variety of writing tools, teacher resource materials, and supplies to “foster independent writers who are able to communicate their ideas.”

**Kim Duke, kindergarten teacher, Frenchtown Elementary, Frenchtown.** “With 21 kindergartners, my goal is to meet the very diverse learning needs of each of my students,” says Duke. Her grant will help by purchasing Insta-Learn materials. These “self-checking” materials reinforce and speed learning by providing immediate feedback to children. “They provide hands-on student instruction while freeing up the teacher to work with small groups,” says Duke.

**Dawn McCrohan, kindergarten teacher, Bitterroot Elementary, Billings.** Dawn’s grant will purchase several popular books used with the common core math standards for counting skills, patterning, and sorting skills.

The books are suggested/required but not provided by the school district, she says. “I either have to borrow these books from other teachers who are also using the books or track them down through multiple libraries. Sometimes I have to do without because we can’t get our hands on the books.”

**Lisa Scott, 7th grade teacher, Castle Rock Middle School, Billings.** Scott’s grant will buy Flip video cameras so her students can participate in an annual math competition called “Reel Math Challenge.” Students will work in teams of four to create videos of innovative solutions to challenging math problems that relate to real life.

(Continued on page 6)



Scenes from one of last year’s Karen Cox Memorial grant projects, which funded special hands-on science projects for elementary students in Billings.

## Our mission

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation (MPTF) was created by MEA-MFT in 1996 to promote excellence in teaching and learning in Montana. We do this through the following programs:

- Montana Teacher of the Year
- National Board Certification Scholarships and Assistance
- Montana Educator Forum
- Karen Cox Memorial Grants
- Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics & Science Teaching

The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization; donations are tax deductible.

## You can help!

Here’s how you can help support the foundation’s mission.

### 1. Recycle your cell phone.

Donate your inactive cell phones to the foundation. Send them to Cathy Warner or drop them off at 1232 E 6th Ave, Helena, MT 59601.

### 2. Make a donation. (See page 6.)

**3. Double your money!** An anonymous donor will match donations made by Dec. 31, 2011. (See page 6.)

## MPTF Board of Directors

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Vice Chair: *Jeff Greenfield*

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# MONTANA PROFESSIONAL TEACHING FOUNDATION

## 2010-2011 REASONS FOR OUR SUCCESS!

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<b>MONTANA TEACHER OF THE YEAR</b>	Elizabeth & Erik Burke	Sheri & Steve Postma	Mary Boschert-Brannin	Broadview Education Assoc.
Tom Pedersen (2012)	Joe Cline	Susan Seilstad	Jeffrey Brown	Dana Carmichael
Paul Andersen (2011)	Denny Menholt	Servicemaster Commercial Services	Maurice Burke	Jessi Castaneda
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Great Falls Education Assoc.	Gallatin County Rural Teachers Assoc.	Judie Woodhouse	Ken Egan	Anne Easton
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Montana Unified School Trust (MUST)	Sandra & Jeff Greenfield	Terry Beaver	David Emmons	LouAnne Foley
Patty Myers	Harlem Education Assoc.	Butte Teachers Union	Tom Facey	Kimberley Girard
State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign	Harvest Cleaning Service	Amy Cannata	Lydia & John Fleming	Shirley Greene
<b>SAINT</b> (\$1,000 or more)	Helena Education Assoc.	Maggie Copeland	Galusha, Higgins & Galusha	Richard Hannula & Joyce Jarosz
American Federation of Teachers	Jean Howard	Sandy Denesen	Jamie Garvey	Darryl Helmer
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## REASONS FOR OUR SUCCESS (continued)

Ag in Montana Schools  
 Glenn Allinger  
 Beck's Bugs  
 Best Western Great Northern Hotel  
 Betty's Divine  
 Bound to Stay Bound Books  
 Mary Buck  
 Burton's Classic Hair  
 Moggie Butcher  
 Butterfly Herbs  
 Café Dulce  
 Coldwater Creek  
 CPO Science  
 Cecil B. Crawford  
 Kathie Daviau  
 Sandy Denesen  
 Diamond Back Golf  
 Dinah-Might Adventures  
 DoubleTree Hotel  
 Susan Draa  
 Education Northwest  
 Deana Elder  
 Fact and Fiction

Ellen & Eric Feaver  
 Bonnie Ferguson  
 Lydia & John Fleming  
 Friends of Montana PBS  
 Fuddrucker's  
 Fun-damentals of Learning  
 Garden of Read'n  
 Gayle Graf  
 Grizzly Athletics  
 Peggy Hendrix  
 Hilton Garden Inn-Billings and Missoula  
 Jean Howard  
 Tami Jendro  
 Peggy & Ron Kimmet  
 Learning Tree  
 Dawn & Mark Lewis  
 MEA-MFT  
 Merged Missoula Classified Employees Org. (MMCEO)  
 Missoula Children's Theatre  
 Missoula Downtown Assoc..

Montana Assoc. of Bilingual Education (MABE)  
 Montana Club Restaurant & Casino, Missoula  
 Montana Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM)  
 Montana Learning Center  
 Montana School Counselors Assoc. (MSCA)  
 Mountain Press Publishing Co.  
 MSU-Dept. of Education  
 Montana Unified School Trust (MUST)  
 NASCO  
 Oil and Vinegar  
 Paradise Falls Bar & Casino  
 Sheri & Steve Postma  
 Scooterville Montana  
 Shack Restaurant

Shakespeare & Co.  
 Dan Sieckman  
 Simply Fun  
 Singing Shaman Traders  
 Sorella's  
 Southgate Mall  
 Karin & Wayne Stanford  
 Taste of Alaska  
 Brett Taylor  
 Beth Thomas  
 UM Math Department  
 Universal Athletics, Missoula Store  
 Vicki's Quilts  
 VSA Montana  
 Marvin Weber  
 Wells Fargo Bank NA  
 Wilma Suites  
 Judie Woodhouse  
 World Book  
 Stacy York  
 Zoo City Apparel

**IN MEMORY OF**  
 Geraldine "Gerry" Bakich  
 Tom Bilodeau  
 A. Ray Collins  
 Craig Cummins  
 Buddy Malee  
 Donald Munroe  
 Antoinette Rosell  
 Chester "Chet" Schendel  
 Rita Schmidt  
 Matthew J. Warner

### Thanks to all our donors!

Including those who wish to remain anonymous.

**To our donors:** You deserve to be properly recognized, and we strive for 100 percent accuracy. If we have made an error, please contact the foundation at 406.447.1479 with corrections.

**IN HONOR OF**  
 Tom Bilodeau  
 Eric Feaver's Birthday

## 'Fore' Kids & Education: 2011 MPTF Golf Scramble

Good times were had by all at the 8th annual Montana Professional Teaching Foundation Golf Scramble, held August 4, 2011, at the Green Meadow Country Club in Helena.

Proceeds from this fundraiser support the Foundation's five programs (see page 3).

**Congratulations to the winners! 1st place gross:** Great Falls Education Assoc.; **1st place net:** Hagen's Hackers

**Thanks** to the Green Meadow staff, all the golfers, and the many individuals and groups who donated prizes.

**Special thanks** to our sponsors: MEA-MFT; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana; Montana Unified School Trust; NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance by California Casualty; Student Assistance Foundation; CenturyLink; Kalispell, Billings, and Great Falls Education Associations; Montana State AFL-CIO; Employee Benefit Resources; Harvest Cleaning Service; ServiceMaster; Karl J. Englund; Richard Larson Esq; Pink Ribbon Holders; Denny Menholt Chevrolet Hummer; Mountain West Insurance; JCCS; Tranel Law Firm; University

Faculty Association; Montanans for Tester; Cathy, Alexandra, and Austin Warner in memory of Matt Warner; McDonald Law

Firm; Empire Office Machines; Hughes, Kellner, Sullivan & Alke; Anderson ZurMuehlen; K&J Convention Services; POP's (Paul's Office Products).

**See you next year!** Next year's scramble is tentatively scheduled for August 2, 2012, at Fox Ridge Golf Course in Helena. Mark your calendar, and start recruiting your team. If you would like to be on the mailing list for the golf tournament, contact Cathy Warner at the Foundation office (406.447.1479).



Gross winning team: Great Falls Education Association. From left: Matthew Picking, Mike Picking, Lance "Buck" Olsen, and Paul Senn.



Net winning team: Hagen's Hackers. From left: Mike Kujawa, Mike Kennison, Tammy Pilcher, and Larry Nielsen.

## More teachers earn National Board Certification

Ten more Montana teachers have joined the ranks of the nation's top certified educators, earning National Board Certification—the highest level of professional certification a U.S. teacher can earn.

Teachers who undergo the certification process not only improve their own teaching, they become change agents, going on to lead school reform efforts across Montana. Students statewide benefit as a result. Montana now has 102 National Board Certified teachers.

National Board Certification is a rigorous and costly process that takes up to nine months, presenting a major hurdle to many Montana teachers. The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation helps remove this hurdle by providing technical assistance and subsidy scholarships to Montana applicants. **Congratulations** to the following teachers who have achieved National Board Certification for 2011:

**Krista Boutillier**, Library Media, *CR Anderson Middle School, Helena*

**Susan Crocker**, English Language Arts, *Gt. Falls High School, Great Falls*

**Thomas Cubbage**, Science, *CM Russell High School, Great Falls*

**Kory Johnston**, Generalist, *Chief Charlo School, Missoula*

**Amy Konen**, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts, *Mountain View School, Great Falls*

**Jennifer Lovering**, Social Studies/History, *Columbia Falls High School, Columbia Falls*

**Mary Lyndes**, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts, *Franklin School, Missoula*

**Jeanne Morigeau**, Library Media, *Jim Darcy School, Helena*

**Laura Trapp**, Library Media, *Rossiter School, Helena*

**Janelle Wilson**, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts, *Arrowhead School, Billings*

## Nominate: presidential math & science awards

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation is proud to administer the 2011 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) in Montana. This year, the program honors science and math teachers in grades k-6. Nominations are now open for 2012 awards. If you know an exceptional Montana science or math teacher in grades k-6 with five or more years of teaching experience, consider nominating this teacher. Two winning Montana teachers will receive \$10,000 awards and all-expense-paid trips to Washington, DC.

**To learn more and nominate, visit [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org).** Nomination deadline is April 1, 2012. Nominate soon: it takes time for the nominated teacher to thoroughly prepare an application by the application deadline (May 2, 2012).

**Congratulations to the 2011 Montana PAEMST finalists:** Tammy Johnson (math), Jan Mader (science), David McDonald (science), Joy Javorka (math), Beth Walsh (math), and Carol Pleninger (science). Two state winners will be selected from these finalists.

## Karen Cox grant winners (from p. 3)

**Tanya Kirschman, K-6 counseling, Highland Elementary, Billings.** Kirschman's grant will help reduce bullying at her school with the Purple Hand Pledge program. This program motivates students to apply healthy problem-solving and anger management skills, Kirschman says. Students who adhere to the pledge ("I will not use my hands or my words for hurting myself or others") qualify to win monthly prizes. Kirschman's grant will help purchase the incentive prizes.

## SUPPORT EXCELLENCE!

I want to help the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Montana.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

\$1,000 or more (*Saint*)     \$500-\$999 (*Patron*)

\$100-\$499 (*Supporter*)     \$50-\$99 (*Friend*)

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Please send additional information about the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

You may choose to contribute to MPTF through payroll deduction. If the organization you work for participates in a charitable giving campaign (usually in conjunction with your local annual United Way campaign), simply designate MPTF as your charitable organization of choice.

Please send completed form

with your check, payable to:

Montana Professional Teaching Foundation  
1232 East Sixth Ave., Helena, Montana 59601

**THANK YOU!**

## DOUBLE YOUR MONEY!

An anonymous donor has promised to match all contributions to the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation up to \$5,000 made on or before December 31, 2011. To participate, send your check to the **Montana Professional Teaching Foundation** at the address above.

## Planned giving

As you think about special gifts for family and friends, please remember the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation. It's easy to donate a planned gift to the MPTF permanent endowment.

Montana taxpayers who make a qualifying gift to the MPTF endowment may be able to take a 40% credit against their Montana income tax liability. Businesses can make an outright gift (as opposed to a planned gift) and may be eligible for a 20 percent credit on their Montana taxes.

**For more information on planned gifts,** call Cathy Warner at the MPTF office (406.447.1479).