



# Newsletter

Autumn 2003

## What's Inside



## Fall General Meeting Keynote Speaker Rod Peturson

### Handling the Three-Ring Circus

Imagine this - junior teachers as Ring Masters - facing the gaping tiger's jaw of report cards in Ring One, the fiery hoops of a new literacy initiative in Ring Two, and in Ring Three, the students and parents. Students with special needs in language and behavior, the slow learners and the gifted students, the "average" students and the ones who need a kind word, a warm hug and a good breakfast before they can think about pulleys and integers and report writing. Parents who want to accelerate their bright child, who cannot afford to pay for the field trip to the museum, who just need to talk to someone who cares about their child as much as they do. How can anyone manage all of these demands and still maintain their own sanity?

This was the focus of the keynote address by Rod Peturson, Superintendent of the Greater Essex County District School Board, at OAJE's fall Mini-Conference held at the Thames Valley District School Board. Rod delivered a practical and useful message with his own unique brand of wit and humour, peppered with personal anecdotes from his eclectic career as an educator, and had his audience nodding in agreement and chuckling with empathy.

Rod began with the notion that we are all in a time famine. He gently reminded us that we have a choice of what to do and what not to do; we have to master the art of making those choices, or it will master us. He went on to suggest that one thing we can do is to make the choice to employ strategies in our classrooms that help our students to make the transition

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between dependence and independence, rather than fostering dependence. "Never do for a child what s/he can do for him/herself." He gave the example of the plethora of questions that often follow a teacher's directions to students, and suggested that teachers not foster dependence by answering every one, but rather tell them that they need to find ways to find the answer, and, if everyone in a group has the same question, then they can come to the teacher for assistance.

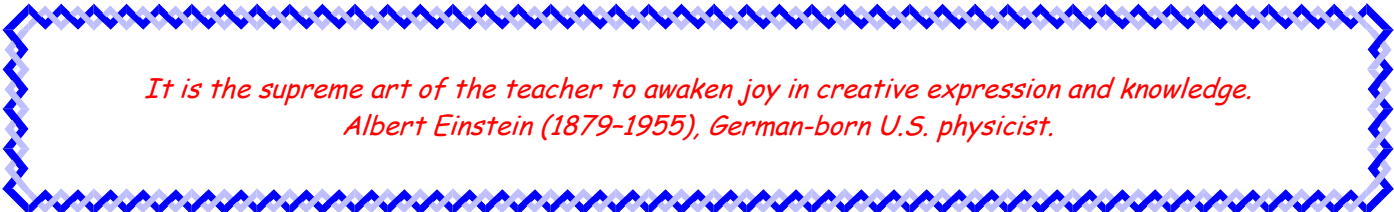
Building a sense of community in the classroom, and having a relationship with every single one of our students, is another strategy that reaps huge rewards. Rod shared his experience with having a class chronicler - someone who, each week, is charged with the task of making photographic records of the events in the classroom that make it a community. Every student gets a chance to be the chronicler, and the photos are mounted, timeline style, around the classroom. At the end of the year, they are mounted and a summary of the event is added, and made into a book for the library. Years later, students come back to see the books from their time in that class.

"One of the best disciplinary tools is sadness." We have a generation of "helicopter parents" who will swoop in to rescue their children from the unfortunate choices they have made. As teachers, we need to foster the notion that students need to learn to make choices, and to be responsible for their choices, whatever the outcome. We also have a responsibility to help them learn from their poor choices and so that they can make better ones next time. One way to help with this is to make sure we have a good parent connection. Teachers need to build an "emotional bank account" with parents, calling when things have gone well, so that when we DO have to call about "bad" things, a good relationship has already been established.

Some other suggestions for managing the three-ring circus:

- Know the difference between routines and discipline - students need routines with no penalties or punishments attached.
- Be specific in setting routines. Focus on prevention and building relationships.
- Know who owns the classroom - is it yours, theirs, or does it belong to the "class community"?
- Arrange your room so that you have "zones of proximity" - you can get to any student in the fewest steps possible.
- Never suggest that something will happen when it cannot or should not - always be able to follow through (e.g., "you are grounded for LIFE!").
- Know what you can and cannot control.

Rod concluded by reminding us that the biggest and most important thing we control is each and every child's experience at school. How they look back on the time they spend in our classroom, is up to us. Building a classroom community not only helps to handle the three-ring circus, but also ensure that those experiences are as positive and rewarding as we choose to make them.



*It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.  
Albert Einstein (1879-1955), German-born U.S. physicist.*

# President's Message

## Jill Snider

### Waterloo Region District School Board

Another school year is well underway as you read this newsletter. The Ontario Association of Junior Educators is entering its seventeenth year as a provincial association, dedicated to the ongoing professional growth and development of anyone with responsibilities for junior education. While every year seems to be busier than the last, we in education can look forward to some promised changes, with a new government in place, and the new challenges that this will bring for junior educators in Ontario.

As an association, we have a strong voice in all committees that are directly related to junior students. Members of the executive represent you on Ministry advisory and planning committees (such as work on exemplars, and the Sustaining Quality Curriculum review process). We also attend, on your behalf, the Ministry's update meetings and related OTF curriculum forum meetings. One representative from every Subject/Divisional associations in the province, from JK-Grade 12, is invited to attend these sessions. It is here that we are able to express your concerns about issues related to junior education. At our November meeting, we will be preparing a brief for an upcoming January meeting with representatives for our new Premier and Education Minister. OAJE has submitted a prioritized list of concerns to be discussed in this brief. Included in this list are the issue of combined grades, the need for additional resources to support the implementation of the curriculum, the inequity of per pupil funding between elementary and secondary students, the need to reconsider the PLP and the OCT, among others. We will keep you informed as to the progress of this discussion.

I invite Junior educators to become part of our association and to contribute ideas, resources, and concerns to anyone on the executive.

I am looking forward to a most exciting year, my last as president of this wonderful organization. I wish each of you a healthy and fulfilling year and hope that OAJE can help you in responding to the needs of the junior children in your care.

## O.A.J.E. Executive 2003—2004

We welcome several new members to our executive this year:

Diana Binotto-Peel from the Avon Maitland DSB, Don Jones from the Halton DSB, and Larry Schwartz from OISE/UT.

We are also glad that our newsletter chairperson, Peter O'Donnell, has agreed to continue to produce our newsletter from his family's new post in the Cayman Islands! Watch for Peter's articles about teaching in the junior division there!

To contact any member of the executive, please check the website [www.oaje.org](http://www.oaje.org) for email addresses and phone numbers. We look forward to hearing from you!

Past President	Janet Rubas, EQAO
President	Jill Snider, Waterloo Region DSB
First Vice-President	Sue Jackson, Thames Valley DSB
Second Vice-President	Lori Barkans, Grand Erie DSB
Recording Secretary	Diana Binotto-Peel, Avon-Maitland DSB
Treasurer	Nancy Moore, Moore Learning
Membership	Judy Kaufmann, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB
Conference Chair	Les Asselstine
Friday Program	Les Asselstine Don Dones, Halton DSB
Saturday Program	Lori Barkans, Grand Erie DSB
OISE Contact	Larry Schwartz
Food Convenor	Joan Fulford
Publishers	Mary Jean Tyczynski
Mini-Conferences Program	Marilynn Hayhoe, Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB Les Asselstine
Communications: Publicity	Deb Duncan Peacock, Waterloo Region DSB
Communications: Website	Marilyn Legault, Hamilton-Wentworth DSB
Communications: Newsletter	Peter O'Donnell, Cayman Islands
Communications: Board and Faculty Contacts	Judy Kaufmann, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB (Public) Marilynn Hayhoe, Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB (Separate)

## Professional Reading

Submitted by **Diana Binotto-Peel, Curriculum Co-ordinator**  
**Avon-Maitland DSB**

### **Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration**

by **Barrie Bennett and Carol Rolheiser, Bookation Inc. Toronto — ISBN 0969538839**

*Beyond Monet* is a practical resource for teachers presenting numerous examples of instructional skills, tactics, and strategies that can be integrated in progressively complex ways to respond to the needs of learners. Authors Bennett and Rolheiser maintain that there is no one best way to teach; each teacher can teach differently and be equally effective or ineffective. The effective teacher deliberately orchestrates instruction based on integration of components from their growing instructional repertoire in response to student need. The authors take myriad of instructional possibilities available to teachers and classify them into instructional concepts, skills, tactics, strategies, and organizers. From there, they explore how teachers can be "consciously skilled" in integrating those instructional possibilities into combinations that are effective for developing deep understanding in students. They provide representative samples from all subject areas to illustrate the idea of effective and intentional instructional integration. In addition, the website [www.oise.utoronto.ca/~beyondmonet/index.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~beyondmonet/index.html) outlines a brief overview of research and additional resources related to ideas in the book. *Beyond Monet* is especially appropriate for newer teachers, but is suitable for all who seek better ways to instruct children.

### **How To Be An Effective Teacher: The First Days of School**

by **Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong — ISBN 0-9629360-2-2**

This wonderful "pick up anytime" to read professional resource addresses the many facets of the teaching profession. It is ideally written for a new teacher, however, the authors have provided key questions that allow reflective learning for the experienced educator.

"If you dare to teach, then you must dare to learn" is a consistent theme throughout the chapters. The authors creatively challenge teachers to think about their teaching practices. In addition, they provided teachers with strategies to promote the development of the effective learner.

*The First Days of School* is divided into 5 chapters that deal with the development of becoming an effective teacher. This includes:

1. How to understand why you are teaching in the first place.
2. How to motivate and inspire your students.
3. How to manage a classroom that is uncontrollable.
4. How to have your students do their assignments and pass their tests.
5. How to cope with the years still ahead of you and retire with dignity.

The following poem concludes this professional resource.

One hundred years from now it will not matter  
What kind of car I drove,  
What kind of house I lived in,  
How much I had in the bank account,  
Or what my clothes looked like.  
But the world will be a better place because I was important in the life of a child.

## **New Format for OAJE Professional Development Opportunities**

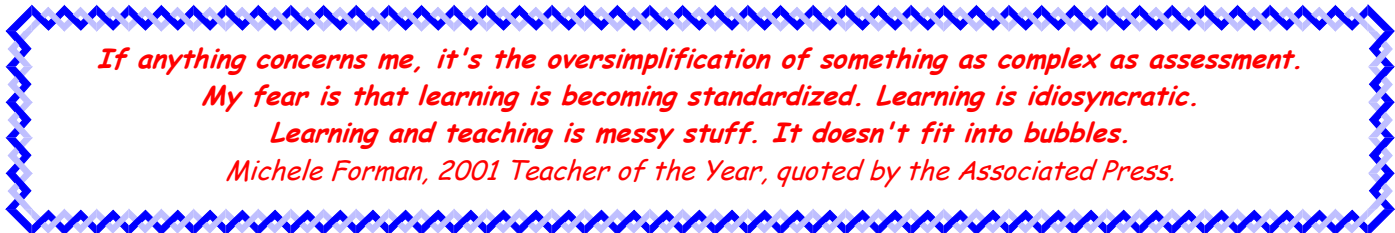
Look for some changes in the professional development opportunities offered by OAJE this year.

To try to meet the increased demand for current, relevant and affordable professional development for junior educators, OAJE has decided to offer three "mini-conferences" throughout the year, instead of 2 general meetings and a spring conference. We hope to offer a larger conference once every two years, with our first being the fall of 2004. Each mini-conference will be held in a different area of the province, with the hope that we can accommodate more of our members who are outside of the GTA.

Our first mini-conference was held in October in the Thames Valley DSB, with a focus on classroom management. Our winter mini-conference, with an inquiry theme, will be held in Dufferin-Peel DSB, and our spring mini-conference will head east, to the Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB. The theme of this last day will be literacy.

We will continue to send notices out via email, and, of course, to post them on the website.

We hope that you will find the change of format useful and look forward to hearing your feedback and suggestions at any time. Executive members can be reached via the OAJE website [www.oaje.org](http://www.oaje.org).



*If anything concerns me, it's the oversimplification of something as complex as assessment.  
My fear is that learning is becoming standardized. Learning is idiosyncratic.  
Learning and teaching is messy stuff. It doesn't fit into bubbles.  
Michele Forman, 2001 Teacher of the Year, quoted by the Associated Press.*

## OAJE Conference Fall 2003

### Getting Ready for Guided Reading — presentation by Charmaine Graves

Guided Reading can happen in the Junior classroom. During this workshop Charmaine gave an excellent overview of the elements that contribute to an effective Guided Reading program. The first essential element she discussed was the need for valid and reliable reading assessment. There are six areas that can be assessed: fluency, comprehension, reading quantity and quality, level of text, attitudes and interests in response to literature. The assessment material she recommended are: The Developmental Reading Assessment Kit (DRA), PM Benchmarks and the C.A.S.I. These will enable a teacher to do a "running record" with a student to determine a student's "level" of reading, strengths, and needs so that reading groups and skill focus can be developed. It is recommended that these running records be done three times a year.

Other assessment tools include: reading logs, interviews, surveys, use of dramas and reader's theater as well as questioning. Charmaine shared the framework of a typical guided reading lesson which includes: introducing the text, reading the text, discussing and revisiting the text, teaching monitoring strategies, providing extension and work activities. She stressed the importance of Junior level teachers modeling "Think Aloud" strategies and using the "read aloud" (reading to students) for practice in applying comprehension strategies. In addition she demonstrated one authentic literacy activity that would support the rest of the class working independently during a guided reading session, and discussed what that format could look like. The concepts and strategies presented were very practical, but too numerous to include effectively in this review.

However, for additional information and activities, Charmaine recommended the following professional development resources:

Fountas, Irene and Gay Su Pinnell. *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6*. Heinemann.

Pinnell, Gay Su and Fountas, Irene C. *Leveled books for Readers Grades 3-6*. Heinemann.  
(This last resource includes hundreds of titles of books and the level of its text.)

Guided Reading CAN happen in the Junior level classroom. Thank you Charmaine for an informative and practical workshop

Submitted by:

Pamela Van Nest, Early Literacy Teacher KPR

Cheryl Bowen, Early Literacy Teacher KPR

*The teachers who get "burned out" are not the ones who are constantly learning, which can be exhilarating, but those who feel they must stay in control and ahead of the students at all times.*

*Frank Smith*

# Thank you to the Publishers who generously supported the October Mini-Conference with these door prizes

## **Creative Publications**

Roads to Reasoning  
Number Games

## **Harcourt Canada**

The Language Handbook  
On Deck Reading Library  
Reading Assessment  
Math Vocabulary Dictionary  
Sails Big Book

## **Nelson Thompson Learning**

The Meaning of Educational Change  
Literacy Power  
Cornerstones Assessment

## **Pearson Education Canada**

Partnership in Mathematics Education  
What Really Matters for Struggling Readers  
Systems for Change in Literacy Education  
Make It Real: Strategies for Success with Informational Text

## **Scholastic Canada**

Social Studies Through Literature: Early Canada Kit The Source  
The Polar Bear Son  
Fly Away Home  
Magic Feasts for Ramadan  
The Winter King and the Summer Queen  
In the Great Meadow

## **Wintergreen**

Venn Diagram and Pocket Chart



## Teaching in Grand Cayman submitted by Peter O'Donnell

St. Ignatius Preparatory School is a private school run by the Catholic Parish of St. Ignatius. It is situated in George Town Grand Cayman. It's like no other school I have taught in during the last 27 years.



St. Ignatius Prep consists of four separate buildings that are situated next to the parish church. The administration building holds our IT lab, the offices of the principal, secretary and the bursar on the first floor. On the second floor are the staff workroom, the staff room and the library.

Just behind the admin building is our new canteen on the ground floor and a fabulous new music room on the upper level. These two buildings just opened at the beginning of November, so we have been living with construction crews since September.



Next to the administration building are the classrooms that house the Year 2 to 6 students. There are two classes of each year. As well, this complex has an Art room on the upper level and the washrooms on the lower level. An outside hallway accesses each level. The final building is called the KG building, which houses the two Kindergarten and two Year One classes.

I am teaching a Year 6 class of 24 students. That's a straight grade with 24 ten and eleven year olds. You see, Year 6 is equivalent to our Grade 5. These are the oldest students in the prep school. From here they go on to the high school, St. Ignatius High School, which shares the same campus as the prep school.

Grand Cayman is a British colony that is moving toward independence. The educational system is modeled after the British system. I am in the process of understanding the British system and the terminology that goes along with it, Key stages 1 to 4, schemes of work, etc. We have breaks instead of recess and a canteen instead of a cafeteria.

In October the School Inspectorate visited the school. Four educators, three from the UK and one from Cayman, spent a week visiting classrooms, and interviewing teachers, students and parents. At the end of the week, the four of them went off to produce a report on how well the school had improved since its last inspection. We await that report.

The children come from a variety of countries; Jamaica, Belize, Iceland, Trinidad, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, United States, Canada, the UK and Cayman. They are a wonderful mix of people with fantastic accents and an unbelievable experience of the world.





- Visit our new website at: [www.oaje.org](http://www.oaje.org)
- Check our website links geared to junior level curriculum topics in Social Studies, Science, Math and more
- Find out how to nominate an outstanding colleague for the Junior Educator's Recognition Award
- View upcoming events sponsored by OAJE including Mini-Conferences



# Membership

The cost of an O.A.J.E. membership is \$35.00

An O.A.J.E. membership gives members:

- ☆ Information on issues related to the Junior Teacher
- ☆ Opportunities for input and a place to voice your concerns about education
- ☆ Opportunities to meet and network with other Junior Educators
- ☆ O.A.J.E. Newsletter online
- ☆ Information about our professional development opportunities

## O.A.J.E. Membership Form

Send to: Judy Kaufmann  
 Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board  
 1994 Fisher Drive, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 6X6

Make cheques payable to: Ontario Association of Junior Educators

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member

Renewal