

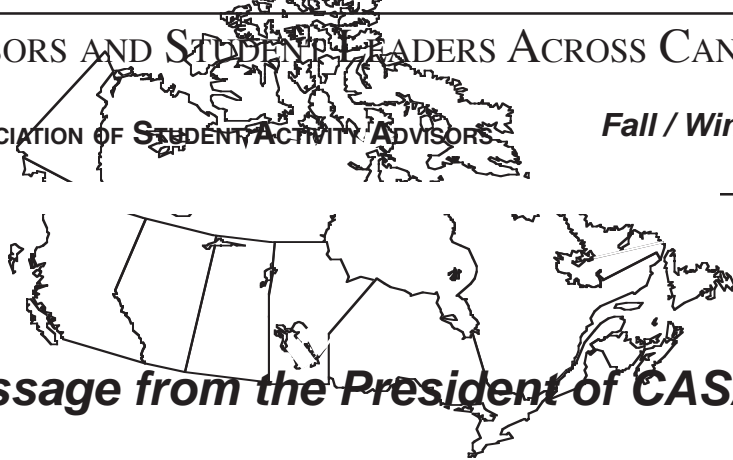
# ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

Vol. 2 No. 1

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

Fall / Winter 1998



## CSLC 1999

### Conference Information

The 15th annual Canadian Student Leadership Conference will take place in Welland, Ontario. Welland's location, in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula, is the ideal place to be in September of 1999.

Welland Centennial Secondary School and l'école secondaire Confédération are co-hosting this CSLC. The conference fee is \$175 per delegate and the registration deadline is April 15, 1999.

Over 800 student leaders and advisors will come together in various capacities of leadership and experience a "Bridging of the Centuries." The conference takes place from Tuesday, Sept. 28 until Saturday, Oct. 2.

### Registration information:

Charles Gale  
Welland Centennial S. S.  
240 Thorold Rd. West  
Welland, ON L3C 3W2  
(905) 735 0700 school  
(905) 735 8063 fax

### Personne ressource du CCLE '99:

Normand Bibeau  
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670, avenue Tanguay  
Welland, ON L3B 4G2  
(905) 732 1361  
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## Message from the President of CASAA

Leadership is Magic! This was the theme of the National Association of Student Councils' Conference held in June in Kansas, USA. Canadian schools attended and took with them the message that Student Activities in Canada — ROCK! Participation in this international event showcased the momentum of our work in the secondary schools of our great nation. Having attended three of the NASC conferences, I am aware of the positive reputation Canadians have. Mark Scharenbroich is right when he says that we have a great depth of understanding about the impact of student activities on the students and citizens of our great country.

It is a magical experience for us as advisors to see the changes that occur in our student leaders as we work along side of them throughout their high school years. Why is this time so special? I believe that we can see the potential of each young person and the impact each can have to improve the quality of life in our communities. Student activity advisors adhere to the axiom that *Only those who can see the invisible, can do the impossible!* Congratulations to all of you who constantly see the invisible for the students of your schools and inspire young leaders to go out and accomplish the impossible. You are building a better tomorrow for our society. Thank you. As we support one another in this great work, we will overcome the obstacles that cloud our vision and distract us from our goals. By each of us doing a little here and a little there, sharing our expertise and our weaknesses, working hard and playing hard, we will arrive at the end of each year filled with satisfaction and joy. It is these intangibles that enable us to recharge each summer and jump back in the saddle and round up our charges again.

I offer each of you my appreciation for your tireless devotion to students and student leadership. The taking of some timely advice from this newsletter, will enable each of us to keep going and going far beyond the normal life span of an EverReady bunny or average advisor! Recharge at a conference, advisor fly-in, or family activity. See the future with the assurance that you are never alone in your work. Capture the magic of leadership!

Gane Olsen

CASAA

## Service Ideas

### Grad Care Package

Students gather together goodies, personal letters and notes from students at the school, copies of local and school papers, and other items of local interest. These are mailed to grads from the previous year who are away at university. This makes the grads feel remembered and that there are people at home thinking of them.

### Grad Breakfast

Senior students organize a grad breakfast for the grads from last year on the Friday before Thanksgiving. This is attended by present staff and grads return to socialize and share their experiences with this year's graduating class and their teachers.

### Fall Clean Up

Local radio station advertises that the senior students will spend one day doing community service by cleaning up yards, raking leaves and general maintenance. Members of the community call the school and book number of students and jobs required. Local media covers the day and positive coverage for the school is generated.

### Toys for Kids

Prior to Christmas, a local community daycare is approached and asked for a list of toys that they need for their children. This list with cost for each item is circulated to homerooms and each homeroom can collect money or fundraise to purchase the individual toys. Senior students get to play Santa and deliver the toys to the daycare centre.

## You Can Do Anything You Want . . .

Each year your newly elected and eager students bombard you with “can we do this?” and “can we do that?” There is an all-purpose answer to this type of question. It is: “You can do anything you want as long as it’s:

1. well planned
2. well organized
3. not hurtful or harmful.”

This is a mutually beneficial approach because it puts the responsibility for the decision making and program planning on the students’ shoulders and eliminates the advisor from being seen as the “yes” and “no” authority. Once students are aware of the ramifications of the above three parameters, they make educated project choices.

### 1. Well Planned — activities include the following:

- Goal Setting: A goal is stated simply and understandably, in one or two sentences and is attainable, moderately difficult and measurable.
- Problem Identification and Solution: Potential roadblocks are dealt with and resolved in a pro-active manner.
- List of Responsibilities: All responsibilities for implementation are brainstormed and put on a list.
- Time-Line: The time-line includes due dates for the listed responsibilities and regularly scheduled “check point” meetings.
- Budget: This includes income, expenses and following monetary procedures.
- Communications: Plans for written, oral, formal and informal are made.
- Evaluation: Points out success and suggestions for the future. No negatives—only possible improvements are discussed.

### 2. Well Organized — this encompasses:

- Team-work: A representative group is involved in project development.
- Accountability: Specific students have responsibilities for their part of the project. A list is posted of all involved.
- Inclusion: Attention is given to allow all students who wish to be involved the opportunity to do so.
- Documentation: Agendas, minutes, committee lists, contact names are all in writing and available for the final report.

### 3. Isn't Hurtful or Harmful

- The Human Factor: Event includes consideration of impact on students, faculty, administration, secretaries, custodians, and community members.
- The Curricular Factor: Complements, not detracts, from the educational goals of the school.
- The Institutional Factor: Doesn't burn down, blow up or otherwise harm the building, the campus or the activity factor.

Once students have these three factors in mind, they will automatically narrow their ideas and become more focused. They will prioritize and determine for themselves that no matter how many fabulous new ideas they may have to change and improve the school, they may not be able to act on every single one and although that may mean disappointment, it does not equal failure. Your challenge as an advisor is to help students work through their ideas and successfully and competently implement those that meet the established criteria.

*Barbara Feldman Philka*

## Icebreakers

Icebreakers are activities that enable a group leader to make the learning process easier for members of a group. These activities will foster group interaction, stimulate creative thinking, and introduce new concepts. Most people use icebreakers to make a group more familiar with its members, and this is a function of some icebreakers, but other carefully implemented activities can allow a group to become more receptive to new information or skill building sessions.

### Using Icebreakers Effectively

- Good icebreakers should last no more than 30 minutes and they are best organized from a low risk to high risk level of participation.
- The activities must be picked to complement the material that follows. There must be a reason for doing the activities.
- The members of the group should never be forced to participate even though the group leader's job is to encourage total participation.
- The leader should participate modelling behaviour and risk level.

### Energizer — Hot Air Rally

**setup:** It is best suited for groups of 20 or less and lasts 5 minutes. Each member of the group needs a balloon and there must be enough space for the group to move about freely in the room.

#### procedure

- Each participant is given a balloon and asked to stand at the starting line. The finish line is identified (approximately 10 m. away).
- At a signal from the group leader, all group members blow up their own balloons and then release them. Each participant follows his or her balloon to the spot where it lands. Then the balloon is picked up, inflated, and released again. This task is repeated until a balloon crosses the finish line.
- The participant whose balloon crosses the finish line first is declared the winner. The person who takes the least amount of times to reach the finish line can be declared the person with the hottest air.

### Getting to Know Me — Paper Dolls

**setup:** It is best suited for groups of 30 or less and lasts 10 minutes. Each member of the group needs a blank sheet of paper and there must be enough space for the group to move about freely in the room.

#### procedure

- Each participant is given a blank sheet of paper and asked to tear the paper into a shape that symbolizes what they are.
- Each person is told to take the remaining paper from their original sheet and tear that paper into a shape that symbolizes something they wish to be.
- At the signal of the group leader, the participants move about the room and introduce themselves. They share their shapes with one another and describe what they have chosen as their symbols.
- A discussion of the whole person as it relates to the single sheet of paper that each person started with can produce some interesting results.

## More Icebreakers

### Names — Don't Forget Me

**setup:** Suited for groups of 20 or less and lasts 10 to 15 minutes. Each person needs a piece of string that can be tied around another person's finger. (Use the knot that people tie their shoes.)

#### procedure

- Sitting in a circle, the leader explains that participants will be introducing themselves as they tie a piece of string around another person's finger.
- The leader selects one participant and ties the string around a finger. The leader says, "Don't forget me, my name is ....."
- The participant then selects another person (not the person next to him or her), and says, "Don't forget me, my name is ....." The participants cannot pick someone who has a string tied to their finger.
- The activity ends when the final participant ties a string on the leader's finger.

### More Depth — My Plate is Full

#### procedure

- Sitting in a circle, the participants introduce themselves by selecting a colour, favourite food, and an eating place that fits his or her personality.
- Each participant writes down their name on the piece of paper. They then write a colour that fits their personality (this can be the tablecloth). Beneath the colour they write the favourite food that they would like to consume. Finally, write the name and location of an eating place that they would like to consume this favourite food in.
- The participants then introduce themselves by stating their names, colours, foods and eating places. Each participant is to provide a quick rationale for each choice.
- The activity continues until all have introduced themselves.

## Time Management

### Weekly List

- ❑ Make a list of the most important things that you want to accomplish in the week ahead.
- Number the items with the most important first.
- Start at the beginning of the list and do not move on until you have completed the first item.
- Recheck your priorities as the week progresses and move to the next item on the list.

This will allow you to stay focused on the things you need to do. Many people lose focus because they try to do too many things at once.

### Stickies

Many people complain that their planners do not have enough room to write all of the things that they have to remember for a specific event. Use stickie-notes to keep lists of things-to-do. Place these stickies in your daily planner in the weeks or days that you are concentrating on. The notes can be moved, added to or removed as jobs are completed.

### E-mail

Keep e-mail correspondence short and to the point. The subject line should be clear to the receiver. In your text ask simple questions and provide answers that are brief. Use the quoting capabilities of your software to provide answers to the questions posed by the sender. This will lessen your typing load. Many people tire of using e-mail because it becomes a novel writing exercise after the novelty wears off.

### Snail Mail

Handle pieces of mail one time only. When you handle this piece of paper only once, you get the job done. Putting it in a pile for later means the chances of it getting lost or forgotten are increased.

## Humour — What's really funny?

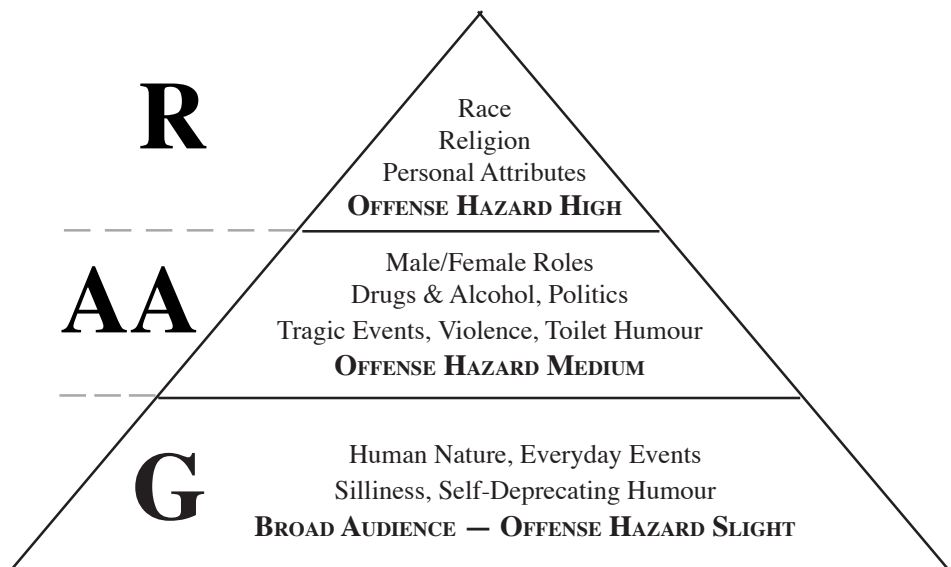
A motivated and energetic student council is always looking for ways to attract the attention and gain the approval of their student audience. An important issue to deal with is the appropriateness of the level of humour that students' skits and announcements tend to deal with. An added difficulty is that the popular media can no longer be relied upon as models of the type of humour that is acceptable on stage or PA in a school setting. It is important to point out that *Saturday Night Live* is on during its timeslot for a specific reason. This becomes more difficult with the arrival of *South Park*, Howard Stern, Gangsta Rap and other movies popular with students.

The first thing to make clear to students is that most audiences in school settings are considered a captive audience. Members of a captive audience did not exercise their right to choose to attend. It is therefore reasonable for a captive audience to expect to be entertained or informed, but not offended.

Humour can help school leaders unite a school and bring people together, but humour, if used incorrectly, can also divide and antagonize. To laugh with others is to unite, to laugh at others is to divide.

When telling a joke the speaker must consider two things: the audience and the speaker's comic ability. Since students are in the public eye when they get up on stage, the audience is not only their peers, it is also made up of the parents of these students as well. The key to good humour is knowing what your joke is about, who you are telling it to, and why you are telling it.

An excellent check for humour is the Humour Triangle made available through Washington State Student Activities. The triangle is divided into categories according to the film classifications that students are familiar with:



Students should keep their school presentation humour in the G level. It is the least offensive, the best at unifying, and the most satisfying for all.

## Teacher Advisors as Change Agents

I have often wondered why elementary schools can get parents to volunteer countless hours of their time working alongside paid teachers to help students. I have yet to see anyone volunteering to help my local mechanic, bank teller or assembly line worker with their jobs. What is so special about working in an elementary school classroom that adults will continue contributing long after their own children have moved on? When asked, the answer seems to be along the lines of, "This is a place where I know what I am doing, and I can contribute and help children change for the better."

In his book *Managing the Non-Profit Organization*, Peter Drucker points out that education is a non-profit business. It differs from a business which supplies either goods or services, and the government which controls. According to Drucker, the product of education is "neither a pair of shoes nor an effective regulation. Its product is a *changed human being*. The non-profit institutions are human-change agents." Parent volunteers in the elementary school classrooms feel that they can make a difference in the lives of the children they work with, and they are willing to do this free of charge.

The volunteering that occurs in secondary schools is quite different. Parent volunteers are a rarity, and they are normally not found in the classroom. This is perhaps because, in the classroom, change at this level occurs at a less visible rate. However, teachers (and some parents) volunteer their time coaching, running clubs and helping with student activities. These are areas where the adult sees themselves as being able to change the students that they are working with, outside of the classroom.

Being involved as an advisor to student activities and saying, "I'm working with kids and that's good enough" is not healthy. That type of attitude lasts for only one or two years and then the advisor burns out or loses their focus. The activity itself must be able to produce a *change* in the students that participate in it. This gives a reason for the teacher/parent to continue volunteering their time, because once the activity becomes like a job, the volunteer loses interest and any reason to participate.

This means that in order to become a change agent the advisor must have three things: information on how to support or implement the changes (resources), activities that students are interested in, and an idea of the results/changes that are intended. If you think back to the volunteer in the elementary classroom who is helping students with reading, they have all of these things in mind.

Some questions to ask yourself:

Who is planning and running the activities?

Who is interested in the activities themselves?

Who is changed by the activities?

If the answer is "the advisor" for any of these questions, then the adult is not acting as a *change agent* and should start adjusting their approach accordingly. It is only when the advisor sees themselves as being able to assist their students in changing for the better that the activity will be worthwhile for all involved.

Dave Conlon

## Praise Nugget

Dr. Jim Kern is a motivational speaker with an excellent thought on the topic of praise. He points out that praising someone for something that he did is not always particularly helpful. For example, saying "Nice game" to an athlete is almost meaningless if that athlete feels that it wasn't a nice game; she could have played better. Jim Kern suggests that, in this case, it would have been much better received had the athlete heard the person say, "It makes me feel good to see how much effort you put into every game." Or, "I really enjoyed seeing that steal you made just before half time." Instead of evaluating a performance, be specific about some element that moved you.

Rather than saying, "Nice meeting," to your president following a student council meeting which she just conducted, tell the president exactly what she did that pleased you. People respond very positively to specific praise.

This nugget is one of 99 contained in a book by Bob Burton entitled **99 Nuggets**. This book is now available through CASAA and can be ordered along with Bob's other book, **Spirit Works...Turn It On!** Both books are great resources for spirit activities and ideas that can be used by advisors and students. Bob Burton was the Director of Student Activities for 30 years at Fallbrook High School in California. He now shares his message with a fast-paced slide show at conferences and schools across North America.

You can contact Bob Burton at [bburton@spiritworks.com](mailto:bburton@spiritworks.com) or visit the website at [www.spiritworks.com](http://www.spiritworks.com).

## Share Shop

The following are from the CASAA Share Shop on the website:

### Fly on the Wall

Paper posters are boring, so liven them up with some human content. To advertise an upcoming dance, a small grade nine volunteered to be taped to the wall at a major exit. (Another use for duct tape!) The student had small flyers in his hand promoting the dance which some people took. He took the opportunity to tell the assembled crowd about the upcoming dance. The point was that it drew a crowd and was a great one-time advertisement.

### Music in the Caf

Music in the cafeteria can liven up lunches and provide entertainment for students. It's also a very simple way to raise money. Provide a stereo in the cafeteria during lunch and have an organization bring in all their CD's. Charge the students 50¢ to hear their favourite song. Then add a twist with the VETO rule. If someone doesn't like the song that is on, they can pay \$1.00 to have it turned off. Then they must pay 50¢ for the song that they want to hear.

### Turkey Bowling

All you need is plastic wrap, vegetable oil, and a few bowling pins. A couple of thawed prepackaged turkeys are unique stand-ins as bowling balls. This can be a great fund raiser charging for the opportunity to have a spare.

### Sidewalk Posters

A good way to catch the attention of your students walking into the building is to put your posters on the outside walkways with sidewalk chalk. It's a fun way to brighten up your advertising and it washes off easily for the next time.

Check the website for more ideas!

## Spot the Student Leader Is it you?

This list is for those who lead students. This list is applicable to the advisor and to the students who find themselves in leadership roles.

Student leaders are coaches appealing to the best in their fellow students; they're problem solvers, advice givers, cheerleaders, and change-makers. The door is always open to new ideas or just for a chat. Poor leaders are invisible; they give orders and expect them to be carried out.

Student leaders are comfortable with all groups of people. Weak leaders are uncomfortable with people and walk the hallways with heads down.

The best student leaders don't have private council offices, special privileges or closed meetings. Pretend-leaders have all these things and are always looking for special treatment.

Student leaders lead by being visible and available at lunch and after school; non-leaders don't see the sense in "hanging around."

Student leaders arrive early for events and stay late. Poor leaders get in late and leave on time.

Student leaders are aware of and focused on the group's goals; they think of ways to make people in their school enjoy the learning environment and how to reward them. *Wannabe* leaders think only of the line on the resumé, status, and how they look to outsiders.

Student leaders are good listeners. Weak leaders are good talkers.

Student leaders know the names of people. Non-leaders don't.

Student leaders set up, run, and clean up an event. Inadequate leaders are above menial tasks and dirty work.

Student leaders delegate important jobs. Inferior leaders make all final decisions themselves.

Student leaders can relate to all groups in the school. Impotent leaders do not; they feel strained with people outside of their peer group.

Student leaders are fair. Non-leaders favour their friends.

Student leaders are humble. Inadequate leaders expect reward.

Student leaders are strong; they confront problems. Weak leaders are elusive; they're never at the meeting when the responsibility is assigned.

Student leaders are available to younger students. Feeble leaders don't have the time for anyone who isn't a senior.

Student leaders can relate to staff and administration. Second-rate leaders see them as the enemy.

Student leaders participate in another organization's event. Poor leaders don't participate because they're not in charge.

Student leaders take the role of leadership seriously after the election. Weak leaders enjoy the spotlight of the election best of all.

## Leadership from Attila the Hun

Many people have found great insights from a well-written, simple book entitled *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun*. Wess Roberts' book appears breezy and cheeky but the aphoristic observations by a mythical Attila are timeless and appropriate to many leadership situations. This is a book that can be delved into every once in a while and gems will pop out that apply directly to your situation. After having a difficult year with a student leader who appeared to disagree with everything our group tried to advance, the following was read and the situation became clearer.

Attila the Hun defines leadership qualities with the first being Loyalty.

"Above all things, a Hun must be loyal. Disagreement is not necessarily disloyalty. A Hun who, in the best interests of the tribe, disagrees, should be listened to. On the other hand, a Hun who actively participates in or encourages actions that are counter to the good of the tribe is disloyal. These Huns, whether warrior or chieftain, must be expeditiously removed. Their ability to influence and discourage loyal Huns is a contagious disease. In cases where disloyal actions and attitudes cannot be changed, harsh action must be taken to rid ourselves of those among us who see no value in and subvert our cause."

A student is allowed to disagree with what the group is proposing, but the difference between disagreement and disloyalty must be understood by the advisor and the students involved.

At another time, I wondered why good leaders have high self-esteem. What is the reason for it? Attila says that the reality is that "each succeeding higher level of leadership places increasing demands on the emotions of leaders." Good leaders have "the stamina to bounce back from disappointments" and have the "emotional strength to carry on in the face of seemingly difficult circumstances." This indicates that good leaders do not develop self-esteem on the job; good leaders need to approach the job with self-esteem already in place.

If elections are popularity contests, why do students who are voted *the most popular* stop working after the election is over? Attila states that there is a difference between wanting to be popular and wanting to be a leader. "One who desires to lead must possess an intrinsic desire to achieve substantial personal recognition and be willing to earn it in all fairness. Success in office will depend largely upon sustained willingness to work hard." It is the hard work of a leadership position that causes the campaign rhetoric to fade and the level of participation to deteriorate.

If you haven't already done so, get yourself a copy of:

### **Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun**

Written by Wess Roberts, Ph.D.

Published by Warner Books. (ISBN 0-446-39106-9)

## Experience Says

1. Things are never thrown to the crowd at an assembly or pep rally. These things always come back at the most inopportune times.
2. Custodians and secretaries are the most important staff in the school. Keep them happy.
3. Less than half the people who volunteered to clean up at the end of an activity actually show up.
4. Rookie presenters and coaches lose more than half their IQ when standing in front of a microphone. Use video over live presentations.
5. If the expected happens, you're in trouble. Expect the unexpected.
6. Mothers always wanted to go to the perfect prom—but they didn't, so they expect you to have a perfect prom for their daughter.
7. Car trunks at dances always have more than a spare tire.
8. If you don't own a van, you have to have a kid with a pick-up truck on student council.
9. Principals like activities but they hate surprises. Let them know when something went wrong.
10. Never screen print a spirit item with a date on it. Time passes and inventory with dates doesn't sell. Always presell dated items.
11. Fundraising people do not sell their product door to door. They sell it to you. Know your school and community before you commit.
12. A school spirit item with the same colour as a pro sports team will not command the same price or demand for that item no matter how close it looks to the real thing.

## Quotes

You cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.

*Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

The simple factor of funniness can never be the sole criterion to justify a joke, sketch or performance.

*Steve Allen*

We trained hard—but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form into teams, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing. And what a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing inefficiency, confusion and demoralization.

*Gaius Petronius Arbitr,  
1st Century AD*

One of the qualities that separate us two-legged animals from the four-legged ones is compassion. It is what makes us stand up tall instead of crawling about on all fours. And standing up tall is what frees our arms to reach out to a fellow being and say, "Let me help you."

*Beverly Sills*

On goal setting:

Never start with tomorrow to reach eternity. Eternity is not being reached by small steps.

*John Donne*

One person can live on a desert island without leadership. Two people, if they're totally compatible, could probably get along and even progress. If there are three or more, someone has to take the lead. Otherwise, chaos erupts.

*Warren Bennis*

## Proud of What?

Institutions of all types – corporations, retail stores, restaurants and businesses – all display certain characteristics that give them a distinct identity. Billions of dollars are spent each year developing, protecting and projecting this image to the public via advertising and packaging. Each and every school has an identity as well. In some schools this image is projected subtly, while in others it is thoughtfully developed and actively promoted.

All schools send out clues as to what “things” (concepts, philosophies and attributes) are valued by the institution. The term “Pride” is often used in schools. Rarely though is the question “proud of what?” asked and perhaps more importantly the “how do we show it?” component is often taken for granted. This should be addressed by the staff and students of a school so that a better picture of a school’s identity as an institution and what it values can emerge. Once a staff and a student body know what they are proud of, true pride can be maintained and fostered by all.

The following exercise can help to start the discussion about what staff and students are really proud of at your school.

Draw a diagram of a simple one-room school house on a piece of paper and then identify the following by writing them on the indicated part of the building.

Foundation – the 4 most important underlying beliefs / ideas / values that your school is built on.

Walls – the 2 or 4 visible characteristics of your school that are supported by the foundation beliefs.

Front Door – something that your school does to make people feel welcome as they enter your school, or a first impression people get when entering.

Windows – some of the activities or events that take place in your school that let people see what is valued by the school.

Roof – 1 or 2 large projects at your school that touch on or cover several aspects of your school and what it values.

Bell – one thing that draws attention to your school from the outside.

*Tom Heethuis  
Presenter at CSLC '98*

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You have received a copy of this newsletter because of CASAA's commitment to providing resources and information to teachers and students across Canada. Please pass this information on to other advisors who would benefit from it.