

# ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

Winter 2002 — 2003

## CSLC 2003

Start planning now how you're going to get to Newfoundland in Sept. 2003, because you will be sorry if you miss the *Canadian Student Leadership Conference*.

Registration for the conference is happening online again, and it will be opening in February, 2003, but here are the basic details:

Preconference: Sept. 27 – 30

Conference: Sept. 30 – Oct. 4

Location: Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's, NF

The theme of the CSLC 2003 is *Unlock the Future*. Students and advisors are invited to explore North America's oldest city and embark on a journey to leadership success.

Delegates will participate in workshops, will go on guided tours and will listen to motivational speakers. Students and advisors will gain new friendships and experiences that will last a lifetime.

Website: <http://www.pwc.k2.nf.ca>

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## A Letter from our Executive Director

When Yorkton Regional High School hosted the first Canadian Student Leadership Conference, little did I know that this was the beginning of something significant in the life and work of Canadian high schools in the years to follow. I have had the good fortune of following and observing the growth of student leadership across the country in the past eighteen years. I have attended seventeen student leadership conferences across this country, and I continue to be amazed at the high calibre and quality content of each conference.

In the early years, there have been many educators who have provided visionary leadership to the organization itself (CASAA) . . . people like Barry Sharpe, Murray Baker, Josephine Budgell, Wayne McCullough, Dr. Al Herrington, and many others; and this visionary leadership continues to this day. Individuals have come forth and have given time and energy to a worthwhile cause. Our students and those educators who spend time in student leadership work are the recipients of what these individuals have to offer their schools and communities.

I have also witnessed how committed our educators are in helping students develop leadership skills par excellence. We are all volunteers – we must never forget that – and continue to go the second mile so that our youth will develop into fine leaders and citizens. A number of our people not only share their creativity with others; they are prepared to take risks in order that we will have a fine program. Some people take risks, too, in ensuring that our Association – The Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisors – continues to grow and be effective in its mandate of providing leadership programs to those engaged in this work.

In April 1993, I was appointed Executive Director (volunteer) of CASAA and in the following nine years, I have witnessed a number of significant

*cont'd on back page*

CASAA

## **Icebreakers**

It is important to help a group get familiar with each other before asking them to interact. Icebreakers allow movement, some humour and the opportunity to meet many people in the group. The following is a good physical icebreaker:

### **Great Canadian Shakes**

The group is asked to pair up and be willing to learn a little about Canadian geography and customs. The first province you visit will be on the west coast in BC, where they have lumberjacks. Participants shake/clasp hands as if they are operating a two-person long saw.

Travel then to the Wild Western provinces and have different pairs “do-si-do” and then give each other a high five with a “yeehah!”

Change partners again for an Ontario milkshake where one partner interlaces fingers and turns their thumbs down; the other partner grabs the thumbs and gives them a very dairy squeeze.

Moving to the next set of partners we visit Quebec where we prefer to see a quick buss on either cheek with a light hug because we’re just a little bit of Europe.

Finally, visit the Atlantic provinces with a new partner and you can do a crab walk while extending lobster shape fingers. (live long and prosper – trekkies will love it)

After you have traveled across the country, you then revisit the areas in no particular order and the participants must find the partner that they exchanged greetings with in that area to acquaint themselves.

## **Lego Lesson**

**Purpose:** To demonstrate the uses for both teamwork and competition.

**Time:** 30 minutes for Part A, and another 20 minutes for Part B

**Materials:** one Lego set of about 60 – 100 pieces for each 6-7 students

### **Part A**

Prior to handing out the complete set to each group, take 2-3 key pieces of each set and mix with the other sets. Choose these pieces from the last 1/4 of the instructions.

Give each group of 6-7 students one Lego set, and tell them the first group to complete their set is the winner.

Students will work together very quickly, but they will soon discover that they need to co-operate with the other groups if they wish to complete their task.

### **Questions:**

1. What kinds of co-operative processes did you and your group use?
2. Who made the decisions in your group?
3. How did you figure out that you had to co-operate with other groups?
4. What did you offer the group? Did you offer more in the co-operative process or the competitive?
5. How did you change from co-operative processes to competitive? How did you feel?
6. Which is more important, competition or co-operation?

### **Part B**

To demonstrate that learning to plan is a transferable skill.

Ask the class if they think that they can put their puzzle together faster now that they have all the pieces, and they have had one try already. Invariably, they will feel they can.

Have each group take their Lego puzzle completely apart. Give them 2 minutes to make a plan without touching the pieces. After 2 minutes planning, have them stand up and rotate to another group’s puzzle. Tell them the first group finished wins.

### **Discussion:**

1. Were you able to use any of your plan from the original puzzle to assist you in building the second? How much of it was helpful?
2. Since you had no time to prepare for the new puzzle, did the ability to plan help your group with the new puzzle?

*Al LaFontaine*

## Controlling Chaos

As an advisor, you know that students should be running their meetings without needing your direct control. However, when you step out of the room or do not make a meeting, sometimes these meetings can become chaotic and nothing seems to be accomplished. Chaos happens in meetings when there is lack of respect, lack of direction, poorly defined responsibilities, or not enough experience. Students must learn to respect the process of a meeting and respect the people involved. This may require your chairperson acting a little more autocratic than he or she is normally comfortable with. Point out to the students that some teachers are often tougher or more autocratic in the first few weeks of school as they try to “establish who is the boss” in the classroom; they then may return to this autocratic style when the class is getting out of control later in the year.

Outlining guidelines for meetings that the group is comfortable with at the beginning of the year is important. The chairperson can go back to those guidelines if the democratic or laissez faire leadership style is not working for the group and anarchy seems to be just around the corner. As the advisor, you may have to step in and remind the students of the guidelines that have been agreed to. Being effectively assertive is not the same as being bossy, and this is a valuable leadership tool for your chairperson to learn.

When you as the advisor let go of control, chaos may happen — and that’s OK — it’s hard because as an advisor you think that *you* look bad, but this situation allows the students room to learn. What they will learn is that **THEY** need to organize and deal with the chaos if they want things done. I learned this as a parent of four kids. The first time we left them alone for an evening there was ANARCHY!! (Luckily there was no blood.) However, they discovered that nobody liked that state of affairs, and since they liked being left alone for an evening **THEY** had to solve it. The anarchy subsided and an uneasy peace ensued.

Things to solve meeting chaos:

- have an agenda with real timelines: and stick to it!
- have students report to the large meeting but work on creativity (chaos) in committees
- let chaos reign and then evaluate the results. Ask them what they must do to solve the problem.
- demonstrate how someone can assertively take control.
- reintroduce some icebreakers that allow students to get to know each other on a more personal basis.

The worst thing to do is to ignore the chaos and hope it goes away. Student meetings may not always need your direct control, but they do need your direction.

*Dave Conlon*

## Icebreakers cont'd

### Conga Balloon Line

Participants line up one behind the other in a single file. Each person inflates a large balloon and then places it between himself and the person ahead, by placing the balloon at chest or stomach level. Each person in the line will have a balloon placed between their stomach and back, except for the ones at the front and back of the line. Now without using their hands, the group attempts to negotiate around an obstacle course set up in the room.

### Pocket / Wallet / Purse

Each participant is to take three items out of his/her pockets or off his/her person and put them in front of him/her. Each participant is to introduce him/herself. (i.e. name, where from, etc.) Then using each of the three items as references, the person is to tell more about him/herself by relating the items’ importance /significance to him/her.

### The Human Timeline

Have 30 envelopes ready with an event from the past 100 years written on the outside, and the year it occurred written on a piece of paper which is placed inside the envelope. Each student is given an envelope with an event written on the outside. Without looking inside the envelope, students must arrange themselves in chronological order according to when they think the events took place. After students have formed a line, they then open their envelope to see what year their event occurred. If a student is not in the proper place, they must move to the correct location along the human timeline.

## Ideas from CASAA

### Reflective Advertising

Dry erase markers on mirrors in washrooms are a great way to get your message out in a unique way. (Make sure that the markers are NOT permanent!)

### Instant Staff Thank You

After a heavy time where activities seem to be infringing on class time, put boxes of instant pudding in staff mailboxes. Accompany the boxes with the short note – *Thanks for pudding up with us!*

### Ham or Spam

Teachers or students participate in this *fun*-raiser. Each participant has a jar with **Ham or Spam** written on it. Silver or folding money placed in the jar is positive, so the person with the most positive points receives a ham. Pennies are negative and the lucky participant with the most negative support receives a can of Spam.

### Village People Day

A unique day to see all of the wild past styles is Village People Day. This is not taken from the group who sang the popular “YMCA” song, rather from Value Village. Students dress in what they can put together from “the Village” (a second hand clothing chain). The great thing about this day is that everyone can afford to participate and some staff don’t have to reach that far into their closet to be a part of it. If you don’t have a Value Village, it can be the local Thrift Store that benefits from your spirit. This activity can be culminated or complimented with a Thrift Shop Prom. The styles are guaranteed to be outrageous, and the fun is truly inexpensive.

## Lessons in Leadership from Great Films

For those of you who enjoy a good movie, here is a list of videos that you might consider for your leadership class. The videos are arranged by themes of leadership and can serve as a useful vehicle to teach significant truths about the human condition. These movies are good a revealing “how people think, how they act, and how they dream.”

### Themes

Guiding the Ship:

Following your hunch – *The Hunt for Red October*

The Importance of Improvisation – *Apollo 13*

The Failed Promise of Heroic Leadership – *Dead Poets Society*

Creating a Team:

Turning Around a Faltering Team – *Hoosiers*

Mentors and Proteges – *Norma Rae*

Conflicts and Turnarounds:

Socratic Leadership – *12 Angry Men*

Turning around a Troubled Organization – *Twelve O’Clock High*

Self-Leadership:

When Leadership Fails – *Citizen Kane*

Morality and Leadership – *Wall Street*

The above thematic framework is taken from Clemens and Wolff’s book entitled, *Movies to Manage By*. This book provides a solid analysis for each film as it pertains to the leadership topic. You can get the book or simply watch the video and frame your own questions for viewing and group discussions.

I’ve seen all the films and have used them in different settings with students and adults dealing with a variety of different concepts: conflict, group development, ethical behavior, teamwork, and power. The experience has been very positive as viewers can learn as much about leadership from a film as they can from traditional books, lectures, or case studies. If time is an issue, showing clips can serve as powerful visual images that have lasting impact. A reminder though, always preview the film yourself to determine its appropriateness for your own particular audience.

Now get out the popcorn and enjoy . . .

*Eric Dowsett  
Vincent Massey High School*

## Hey! Let's Set A World Record

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On May 1, 2002, Galt Collegiate Institute in Cambridge, Ontario, attempted to set a world record for the largest group hug. The primary reason for the “hug” was to publicize Galt Collegiate’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This goal was met as the world record attempt received national print media coverage and local television coverage. While the hug record was broken, it was subsequently broken by another group before we could get placed in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Still, it was worth the effort due to the school and community spirit that was created. Listed below are steps we found that were necessary in an event of this magnitude.

### Pre-Event

- Find a record that is viable and appropriate for your school. Skim the *Guinness Book of World Records* for ideas or create a new record if you have a unique idea.
- Tie your attempt to another event e.g. reunion, orientation day, opening of a wing.
- Contact **Guinness** immediately. Website: [www.guinnessworldrecords.com](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com)
- Email Guinness about breaking an existing record or setting a new record.
- Get rules, contracts, and documentation about the most recent record from Guinness.
- Establish committees to streamline the organizational structure.
- Send a press release to all local media outlets before the event.
- Establish a theme month at your school e.g. “Set a School Record Week” Side show e.g. “School Freak Week”
- Enhance your theme with related events. e.g. Hug Day, Hershey Hug and Kisses Day, Random Hug Day
- Build the media hype with radio interviews, newspaper interviews, school newsletter. Contact local media personalities and invite them to participate.

### Event

- Map out the school for efficient movement.
- Review the rules of the record to make sure that it is official.
- Identify organizers and marshals with t-shirts and/or hats.
- Hold opening ceremonies at a central location that restate the goal of the event.
- Use symbolic links (oldest and youngest in community, hugging the school).
- Employ marshals scattered throughout the event to ensure official record conditions are met.
- Make media accommodations e.g. scheduled interviews, accessibility, information packages.

### Post Event

- Send thank you letters or cards to sponsors, witnesses, teachers, organizers and anyone else who helped make the event happen.
- Collate all signatures and documentation pages to make sure everything is done according to contract.
- Send to Guinness (via registered mail) all documentation including a cover letter, any newspaper clippings, video evidence, participant lists, advertising materials — in other words any items used to promote or validate the world record.

Mark Hunniford

## Fortune Balloons

The “Everyone’s a Star” activity where a paper star is placed on the school walls with the name of each person in the school is a great activity, but the activity loses its power if it’s done every year. You can then use hearts for Valentine’s day, but students get quickly used to the paper cutout on the wall activity. This event is a good follow-up option.

Prepare fortunes for every student in the school similar to the ones found in fortune cookies. If your mascot is the Crusader, you might write, “A tall dark crusader is in your future.” Place each fortune in a balloon and inflate the balloons. From an alpha list of the students at your school, write the name of each student on a balloon with a permanent marker. Staple the balloons to the bulletin boards or tape them to poster paper around your school.

The multi-coloured balloons make for a fun atmosphere and students breaking the balloons makes for an energetic time. We had 60 leadership students prepare this activity for a school of 800. Remind students to clean up the broken balloons.

*Al LaFontaine*

## Karaoke NOT Okey Dokey

Karaoke as a lunch time activity is a great appetizer for the school population. However, be aware that today’s popular songs contain lyrics that are not appropriate cafeteria fare. Your karaoke catalogue may be censored, but your students know and will sing *all* the words to Eminem’s songs.

## Constitution Cornerstones

Natalie Thomson was asked by the New Brunswick Ministry of Education to look at all of the available constitutions in the province and provide recommendations as to what should appear in secondary school constitutions for student councils. There were many different ways that schools addressed the same issues, but she came up with these five key recommendations:

### Recommendation #1

*Include the qualifications one must possess, and the procedure for application to run for an executive position on Student Council.*

Whatever the goals are for a typical council member, they must be clearly stipulated.

### Recommendation #2

*Regulate meetings.*

This allows the council to be effective and productive. The organized meetings allow the council to be provided with more feedback and generate more ideas.

### Recommendation #3

*Outline expectations of student council members.*

When students run for council positions, it is beneficial if they know exactly what will be expected of them once they are on council.

### Recommendation #4

*In order to protect schools and students, consider the following administrative clauses: Right of administration to veto council decisions, appointed positions, process for dismissal, and a process for amending the constitution.*

You don’t want to have bad things happen to your council, but it is good policy to have procedures in place when they do.

### Recommendation #5

*Include a process for appeal or grievance, for those who feel that elements of the constitution are unjust.*

This helps to increase the validity of the document.

It is obvious that not every constitution should be the same, because each school may choose to deal with their issues in different ways. If you include the above five recommendations in your constitution, you are going to have a usable document that enhances the leadership experience for your students.

## Negotiating with the THEY factor

*“They never let us do anything at our school.”*

The above statement is often made out of frustration by very enthusiastic and committed students who come in conflict with the THEY factor.

THEY are the administration and conflict tends to result when the students want to do something that THEY don't approve of. The following will attempt to explain the 3 factors that will provide successful negotiations at any level with THEM.

### 1. Separate the People from the Problem

The first error that students make in attempting to negotiate with an administration is that they focus on the personality involved rather than the problem between them. Many students focus on the age difference (THEY are too old to understand) or the fact that it is a person from the administration standing in their way. The two personalities must remain separate from the problem for successful negotiation to take place.

### 2. Focus on Interests, Not Positions

What most students fail to realize is that THEY have an interest in the school and the events that happen there. Students cannot gain the approval of their administration for events when they focus on the administration's position rather than the interests of the administration.

When you attempt to resolve a situation that is at an impasse, you must recognize that interests motivate people. Your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what caused *you* to decide. To negotiate successfully with your administration, you must find out what THEY used as the interests that caused the decision to be made.

### 3. Generate a Variety of Solutions

Take the example of a student council approaching the principal with the idea of having a school formal at a local hall. The administration is uncomfortable with the idea and decides not to allow it. A good council will focus on the interests of the administration and not the position that it has taken on the subject of the school formal. They will then address the interests of the administration and try to ascertain why the position was taken. Is it a problem of security? Is it a concern for underage drinking? Are there supervision concerns? When you address the specific interests of your administration and then provide a variety of practical solutions to the problem, you will be able to much more effectively negotiate a successful result.

When students are aware of the three facets of successful negotiating, they will be able to satisfy their interests and the interests of their administration. (The three principles of this negotiating technique are presented in the book, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Roger Fisher.)

*Dave Conlon*

## Motivating the Members

A common complaint from student council leaders is that they can't seem to get the rest of their group to assist in doing things for the school. What these students must realize is that people are motivated when they have direct ownership or see something that can provide some benefit to them either directly or indirectly.

One of the problems with student leaders is that they hate group projects. They learn this lesson early in elementary school, because working in groups usually means that you do ALL the work if you want it done right. When you join a student leadership group, you tend to find the same attitude and behaviour. One way to break this paradigm of behaviour is to have students responsible for one specific event a semester. This means that if you have 15 members on your student council, you will have 30 events happening in the year. Your peers will be motivated when they have direct ownership — they are the person in charge who is receiving some direct benefit.

If you make it YOUR personal goal to try and actually get things done, YOU will be doing all the work. You will be successful in your efforts because you are a competent and motivated person, but you will be very stressed and tired by the end of the year.

It's challenging, but your peers will get things done when they have something to do.

## Quotes

How far would Moses have gone if he had taken a poll in Egypt?

*Harry S. Truman*

An optimist is a person who sees a green light everywhere, while a pessimist sees only the red stoplight ... The truly wise person is colour-blind.

*Albert Schweitzer*

It's a shallow life that doesn't give a person a few scars.

*Garrison Keillor*

We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

If I have a thousand ideas and only one turns out to be good, I am satisfied.

*Alfred Nobel*

One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

*André Gide*

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise.

*F. Scott Fitzgerald*

## letter from Executive Director (cont'd)

developments; to name a few:

- a) the creation of provincial organizations for students and educators in all provinces (in 1985, there were only two provinces – Saskatchewan and Ontario – that had leadership activities for students and, to some extent, educators)
- b) the ongoing development of leadership training (seminars, workshops) for educators at each CSLC and the development of, and availability of, printed resources to assist educators and students (thanks largely to Dave Conlon, we have many materials available)
- c) the publication of 'ABOVE AND BEYOND' in both official languages
- d) French translations of many materials for our Francophones; and the list goes on.

Indeed, we have come a long way in eighteen years, and we still have a long way to go. One of our dreams has been to establish a permanent home for student leadership that is manned by a paid personnel. This will emerge in time. As I complete my work as Executive Director of CASAA, I want to say THANK YOU to the many outstanding student activity advisors whom I have come to know and admire over the years. You folks have "made my day" as the saying goes.

I wish you all continued success in your work with students and others and I shall continue to follow the work of CASAA with keen interest in the years to come.

George M. Takashima  
Executive Director for CASAA  
January 2003

*George will be retiring his volunteer position as Executive Director of CASAA in January, 2003. His tireless work and contributions to student leadership have made a significant difference to students and advisors in Canada. His leadership is appreciated and will be missed by all.*

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