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LEADERS & LEARNERS

THE VOICE OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS/L'ASSOCIATION
CANADIENNE DES ADMINISTRATEURS ET DES
ADMINISTRATRICES SCOLAIRES

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Upcoming CASA Events

- Summer Leadership Academy, July 2006, Toronto
- Annual Conference, October 2006, Winnipeg

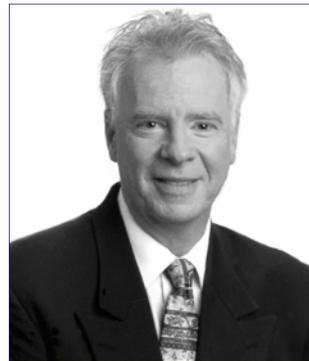
Details on CASA events will be posted at www.casa-acas.ca.

Message From The President: Personal Perceptions On Our Journey So Far

Although self-evaluation is not always a pleasant task, such introspection is essential to the ongoing development of an individual or of an organization. This is the case for CASA. A full and complete perspective can be gained only by soliciting input from members; thus, please bear with me while I share my personal perceptions.

It is essential that an organization has vision and goals that reflect that vision. A self-evaluation lets us examine our accomplishments and to look forward to working further on those goals that require continued emphasis.

Our organization has struggled in size and, consequently, in financial resources. Given our national diversity and decentralization of responsibility for education to the provinces, it is hard to find issues of common national interest.



Bob Mills
CASA president

The mortar that has held us together to date has been **Frank Kelly**, our executive director. His leadership, experience and forethought have remained the constant in our growth and development.

We have been most fortunate in having the American Association of School Administrators as our partners. The size of AASA, its openness, and geographic proximity have provided us with exceptional professional development opportunities and a partnership with an organization with a

similar goal of service to its membership and to the community.

During the past four years, CASA has worked extremely hard to provide professional development activities for our members. The Annual Conferences each fall and the Leadership Academies each summer have proven to be very popular. They have also been extremely successful both pedagogically and financially.

Our overall financial picture is proving somewhat problematic but, as this improves, we are able to provide further services and resources to our membership.

I believe that CASA has developed a clear identity and attracted members who are committed to its goals and vision. With this membership commitment, CASA has been able not only to survive but also to thrive.

Message From The Executive Director: A Voice For The Administrative Point Of View In Education

As we move into a new year, the second half of the first decade of the new millennium, it is a good time to take stock of the rationale for nurturing CASA as a national organization for senior education administrators. It is not easy to promote such an organization and there are some basic reasons.

1. Canada does not have a national education policy. Each province works hard to promote its individual strengths and positive services. There is no financial incentive to share; there is a strong independent desire for each province to pursue federal advantages for its own benefit.
2. Transportation costs are huge in Canada. Finances are not available to allow supervisory officers to travel and participate in significant programs in other provinces.
3. Supervisory officers in every province carry a heavy load and tend to concentrate on their local problems and their local initiatives. This busy pace precludes spending much time looking at broad national issues.
4. Other professional organizations offer national discussions on education themes and provide training sessions regularly.

Within the framework of these considerations, there are, however, some very strong reasons to advocate for CASA as a national organization.

1. Despite the lack of a national education policy, there are common national issues. Those working in each province can benefit from the sharing of best practices and innovative procedures. Federal policies and incentives can be formed more easily and may well be more supportive if there is evidence of common support from the provinces.

2. The travel issue remains a serious deterrent but modern technology can be very helpful in bringing together members and ideas from all of the provinces.
3. If each affiliate organization would provide some contribution to the national picture, no one would need to take on an undue load. The operative role of CASA is to coordinate this sharing. Affiliate members can help CASA greatly with a minimum involvement.
4. Other organizations provide strong programs but none of them offer these programs with a focus on the role of the senior administrator. The supervisory officers who manage and lead the school districts of Canada have specific needs and require specific direction to maintain and foster a strong climate for education and a vital climate for leadership growth.



Frank Kelly
CASA executive director

An organization such as CASA must be sustained so that the administrative point of view is made clear, shared and developed based on what is best in all of our provinces. There is still a need to have a national gathering place for administrative concerns and leadership focus. CASA can do that but it requires the assistance of all the provinces.

Time To Nominate EXL Award Winners Again

Since 2002, the EXL Award has been jointly sponsored by Xerox Canada Limited and CASA.

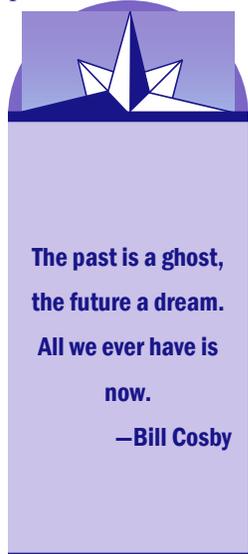
Each provincial association of CASA elects a nominee to represent their province. The national award recipient, selected from these provincial

nominations, is announced during the opening ceremonies at the CASA Annual Conference.

It is not too early to start thinking about which CASA member you would like to nominate. You can share your suggestion with the executive director of your pro-

vincial association. The submissions from the provincial associations for 2005-06 are due at the CASA office by June 30, 2006.

Previous winners include **John Darroch** (2002), **Roy Seidler** (2003), **Ed Wittchen** (2004) and **Edie Wilde** (2005). Good luck to everyone!



**The past is a ghost,
the future a dream.
All we ever have is
now.
—Bill Cosby**

CASA Professional Development: Building Our Strength From Within Our Own Organization



CASA gatherings offer opportunities for both learning and fun. Above: **Doug Player** (left) and **Lee Lucente**. Left: **Ruth Mattingley** and **Paul Collins**.

Ed Wittchen noticed a pattern when he first began attending CASA's annual events.

"It always seemed like I was going east for conferences," says Wittchen, a superintendent in Alberta and former CASS president, and current CASA professional development director.

"One of my offers was to make it a national focus. If we're going to be a national organization, everybody had to have the opportunity to attend things in their home province."

Around 2000 when CASA began a restructuring and refocusing process, the organization had no money left in its PD budget. Expanding the focus could have meant a move in a more costly direction.

One solution proposed was to stop bringing in high-profile

speakers with expensive fees, and to use in-house talent.

"We have lots and lots of talent within CASA—I spend lots of time on school board websites from across Canada," says Wittchen. "We want to expose our delegates to leaders from across Canada, so that our members are involved not only as delegates but as speakers at sessions and panels."

Wittchen is a huge proponent of **Linda Lambert's** idea of building capacity within an organization. "So it's not as much a cost decision as it is one of philosophy. One of our mandates was succession planning. We needed people to be able to afford to bring their deputies and others on their staff."

By lowering costs associated with paying speakers, the fees for attending the Annual Conference and Summer Leadership Academy could be kept reasonable, allowing

divisions to send more staff. People like **Diane Fyfe**, **Ruth Mattingley**, **Bob Mills** and **Doug Player**, for example, all shared Wittchen's philosophy about the importance of bringing "rising stars" from their home districts, people who were not yet supervisory officers but who demonstrated excellent leadership potential.

CASA's national events are now planned with the help of PD Pros, who receive a reasonable management fee for handling details like hotel and meal arrangements. The conferences themselves are set up as profit-sharing events, with CASA retaining 60 percent.

Another change in CASA's professional development opportunities is how sightseeing and social events have been worked into the formal agenda.

"I actually learned that lesson the hard way," Wittchen admits.

"It was in Halifax in 2002 or 2003, and we hadn't built sightseeing time into the agendas. The weather hadn't been nice, but by Saturday or Sunday it turned beautiful. All of a sudden, very few people were at the sessions. You could kind of tell when the harbour cruise went by and 25 of our people waved at us."

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The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to.

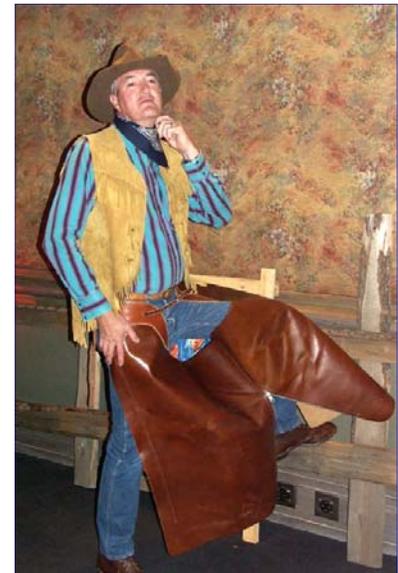
—Marian Wright Edelman

Conferences And Academies, From Coast To Coast To Coast



Clockwise, starting above:

1. **Lee Lucente** (left), **Jim Gibbons** and **John Darroch** deep in discussion.
2. John Darroch got right into Stampede mode at the Summer Leadership Academy in Calgary. Maybe he's wondering where his horse has gone.
3. **Hal Kluczny**.
4. **Diane Fyfe** (front and centre) with some of her staff.
5. Jim Gibbons poses with "The Champ," boxer **George Chuvalo**, a keynote speaker at the 2003 Annual Conference in Hull, Quebec.



(Continued from page 3)

Since then, conference participants have always had a chance to enjoy activities with a local flavour: whale watching, the Calgary Stampede, Maid of the Mist voyages at Niagara Falls and more.

"We recognize delegates will bring their families, too, and we may as well build in that component," Wittchen explains.

Since 2000, CASA events have taken place in almost every region of Canada. Wit-

then says he is grateful for the leadership exhibited by folks who helped turn CASA around over the last five or six years, and hopes the organization can continue to grow in a positive direction.

"With the upcoming White-horse conference in 2007, it really puts the stamp on it to



say we are truly a national organization, from coast to coast to coast."

All photos for this story were contributed by Ed Wittchen.



Without education,
you're not going
anywhere in this
world.
—Malcolm X

CASA Leaders Look Back...And Look Ahead

For this “Report Card” issue of *Leaders & Learners*, we sent out a list of questions on CASA’s past, present and future to some of the organization’s past and present leaders.

Ruth Mattingley joined CASA in 1995 and served as president in 2004-05. She is the superintendent of education at Lambton Kent District School Board and is currently seconded to the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Frank Kelly joined CASA in 1984 and is the current executive director. He has also served as a regional representative, treasurer, president-elect and president. Frank is the executive director of the Ontario Public Supervisory Officials’ Association and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education, and is also affiliated with the American Association of School Administrators.

John Darroch joined CASA by means of his College of Alberta School Superintendents dues in 1986. He recently retired as associate superintendent, instructional & personnel, for the Palliser Regional Division in Lethbridge. John’s roles at CASA have included the CASS rep on the affiliate council, western director, president and past president. He, too, is affiliated with the AASA.

Why did you first become involved with CASA?

Ruth: My provincial organization, OPSOA, highly valued the opportunity to be involved in national discussions about education and leadership and was very encouraging for OPSOA members to become involved. Opportunities to network with fellow educators across Canada and to take part in professional development was very appealing.

Frank: I’m a firm believer in national commitment and have a strong desire to learn from extended experience. I believe in sharing and working with a network of those who work for public education.

John: My initial involvement was as the CASS rep on the affiliate council in 1999-2000 following my year as the CASS president.

Why was it important to you to work with your colleagues at a national level?

Ruth: We all share the same priority, “helping all students receive the best possible public education.” We also share many of the same challenges. This was an opportunity to learn from one another and share successful practices.

Frank: There is much to be learned from different approaches. Supervisory officers have similar skills but develop some better in various provinces.

John: Until I became involved as the CASS rep, I really had given it no thought. Once I became involved, I realized CASA represented a tremendous potential to be a common platform for expressing a unified voice on topics of national significance. If provincial ministers can do it, why can’t system educators?

Why CASA?

Ruth: Because OPSOA was an affiliate organization and I wanted to support it as such.

Frank: CASA has a consistency of experience. These are the practitioners who make education happen at the system level. All members are workers in the field and know the impact of policy on students and communities.

John: CASA was really the only organization that I felt could adequately represent central office staff and the educational leaders at the system level across Canada.

What do you recall about CASA, in terms of the organization’s overall health, when you joined?

Ruth (1995): Shaky. Financially CASA was on shaky ground. Priorities seemed to be a bit vague. Over the years CASA has become more focused and realized what it can and can’t do.

Frank (1984): Over the years, CASA has always provided good professional development opportunities. In earlier times, funding came from fees plus considerable private corporation sponsorship. Events were well funded and well organized. As a member, the organization appeared quite healthy and vital with some very good points of focus on national issues.

John (1999): At the time the focus was on the development of educational “partnerships” with various private sector companies who would pay CASA money every year in return for CASA’s endorsement of their products or programs. What became readily apparent to me was that CASA was living well beyond its means—we were spending money we had not yet (and may never have) received. For example, CASA executive meetings were hosted by CASA in Toronto in a small but very upscale and private, exclusive hotel. CASA paid for all the travel costs, the hotel, the meals. At the same time, we had promises of money from partners but had not yet received very much. We were spending money we had not yet received. As a result, at the executive meeting early

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One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team.

—Kareem Abdul Jabbar

Personal Reflections On CASA's History...

(Continued from page 5)

in 2000, I helped draft a motion calling on the executive to radically reduce spending and to create a strategic plan with a timeframe that would require the organization to return to a balanced budget based on actual funds rather than unrealistic projections.

What sort of challenges has CASA faced in the past, in the "rough years"?

Ruth: Keeping members connected and committed when we were spread over such a large country. Across Canada senior administrators were being reduced in numbers and found just looking after business "at home" was a challenge, let alone volunteering for a national organization. People became skeptical of the integrity of the organization when there were financial challenges. They wanted to know what they were getting for their money.

Frank: "Rough years" came about when corporate subsidies dried up. The dependence on sponsorship had allowed for expenditures well above the collected fees. The challenges included trying to operate a national organization with a minimal fee base.

John: The debt that was incurred leading up to 1999 led directly to several provincial affiliates leaving the organization. They felt they had had no real input in decisions that led up to the creation of the debt but were saddled with an arbitrary (or disproportionate, depending on the view) share of the repayment. It happened at a time when many provinces were moving to various restructuring models that commonly featured a reduction in the number of central office staff (affiliate members). The pressure of few members, the fiscal uncertainty, the fear of a debt of almost a quarter of a million dollars and a dues structure few understood caused many provincial affiliates to reconsider the value of their CASA membership.

What do you think kept the organization together during these "rough years"?

Frank: Volunteer work by a number of people. A desire to maintain a national network and to sustain an administrator presence.

John: OPSOA must be recognized for agreeing to be CASA's banker, providing interest-free financing while we "stopped the bleeding." They also agreed to provide office space and staff for minimal costs. Secondly, CASA's strategic shift through the unrelenting efforts of **Ed Wittchen** to take control of its own PD and maximize its cash flow instead of farming all PD events out to private contractors meant CASA could eliminate the middle man and keep the profits "in-house." Finally, **Frank Kelly's** ongoing willingness to be CASA's executive director on a volunteer basis

(plus the extensive knowledge and history he brought by being a former CASA president) allowed the organization to move aggressively to focus on its debt. And finally, I think CASS's active involvement at the national level was also a key ingredient (but other provinces may not agree!)

Are there individual or collaborative efforts that should be recognized?

Frank: In the past 10 years, there has been a considerable effort from individuals in BC, then Ontario, then Alberta and Quebec. OPSOA has carried the financial operation of CASA over all of those years.

John: Certainly the support received from OPSOA was key, as was the leadership of Ed Wittchen in taking charge of our own PD.

Why did you personally stay committed to the organization at that time?

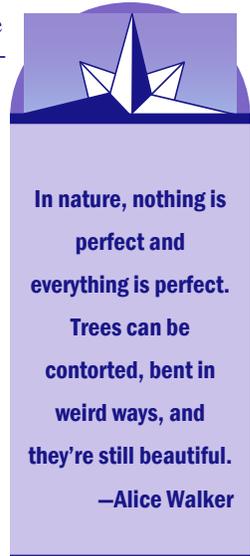
Ruth: Frank threatened me—just kidding! I personally gained a great deal from having the opportunity to meet fellow educators and benefit from outstanding professional development. I saw CASA as a vehicle for networking and for identifying common issues that can draw us together. An opportunity to learn from the best and make education better for all kids through this sharing.

Frank: Education is a global enlightenment and senior leaders have to be aware outside their own district and their own province. The electronic revolution of this time proves this point more and more. We operated CASA without computers and without email and it provided a significant forum and network as well as trading information to senior leaders. Surely we need this even more today.

John: CASA represents the only national voice for system level administrators, regardless of the province in which they live. Dialogue at the national level continues to demonstrate that there are a variety of issues that are common across the nation. They may ebb and flow at different times in different sections of the country, but we have much in common with the provincial affiliates and can learn from those who have already walked the path and encountered the challenges, myths and demons of change.

CASA is a national organization, but it has had some problems ensuring the membership represents each

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More Personal Reflections On CASA's History...

(Continued from page 6)

region. Can you share some of the details of this particular challenge?

Frank: Affiliate organizations subscribe to different causes; some feel that they are having local success and that is all that matters. Some plead poverty and resent paying fees when they do not get an immediate tangible return. Some dislike those involved and want only their own people in charge. Some develop an academic or research base and feel the operational work of CASA is too mundane. Some want to mix with universities and other organizations. CASA faces all of these concerns but we are still the only common forum for senior administration.

John: It has become apparent to me during my tenure that much of the dissatisfaction comes from a general lack of understanding of what CASA is and does by the provincial members and personal positions that have been adopted by some influential provincial leaders based on incidents or actions taken by the national executive prior to 1999 that are carried forward and associated with today's organization. In other areas (i.e., Atlantic provinces), reductions in numbers and scarcity of funding has put membership in organizations such as CASA under the microscope and at peril at the very time when membership is key to consultation and support rather than isolation.

What strategies have been put forward to attempt to bring together all regions?

Frank: We have adjusted fees, developed more professional development programs, taken our sessions to various locations, spread the executive to include all, held forums on issues.

John: Continuing to maintain lines of communications as influential leaders change, special membership rates, restricting the executive to provide for more balanced regional representation, etc.

What direction would you like to see CASA take in the next few years?

Frank: Focus on common issues and deal with two or three per year. Communicate these positions to all affiliates and to ministers. Focus on strengths of those committed to the national cause.

John: To continue to be recognized as the premier source for leadership in-service for Canadian educators and to develop a strong linkage with the Council of Educational Ministers such that CASA's views on issues of national significance are sought after, recognized and valued.

What do you think will help the organization stay strong and continue to grow?

Ruth: Share the success stories in the key areas that we all are focusing on. Keep getting the good word out about the benefits of belonging to CASA. Communication is vital. The newsletter has been an excellent addition and communication vehicle.

Frank: We must nurture leaders who will work with the executive and devote time and energy. We must avoid negative debate and petty affiliate quarrels.

John: The continued involvement of the "new generation" of educational leaders at the school and system levels who don't have the baggage of the past and recognize the value of collaboration for the future.

Do you have any final comments or anecdotes about your time with CASA?

Ruth: My experience as a member of the executive and as president was wonderful. I loved working with Frank, **Gillian Van Zant** and the rest of the executive. The amazing thing about CASA is that it doesn't matter the geographic distance between us; if you have a question or need information about something happening in another jurisdiction all you have to do is pick up the phone or email and a CASA colleague is just around the corner. CASA makes our world a little smaller, a lot friendlier and has extended the opportunity to "gather 'round the water cooler" for senior administrators. It was a privilege to work with CASA.

Frank: CASA has provided some great moments for its participants. The session with **Peter Yarrow**, which developed Operation Respect; the social times in every province; the presentations of good educators; the affiliation with AASA. But most of all, we have benefited from the interaction and dialogue of our members—strong leaders who bring great experience to our sessions.

John: I really have enjoyed my years with CASA. It has provided me with a unique opportunity to develop a network of friends and colleagues from across Canada, and I have grown as a result, while at the same time realizing that the more we are different, the more we are alike. My most touching experience was being selected as the inaugural winner of the EXL Award in 2002. To be recognized by my colleagues in such a way, first provincially and then nationally, will remain among the highlights of my career. And getting to meet and visit with people such as Peter Yarrow would never have happened had it not been for CASA.



**Injustice anywhere is
a threat to justice
everywhere.
—Martin Luther King**

CASA PEOPLE: Faces In The Crowd



Ray Derksen
Manitoba

Ray is superintendent for the Beautiful Plains School Division, and president of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. He has worked as a teacher, vice-principal and principal, and has been a leader with the Frontier Teachers' Association and many committees. He's worked with First Nations communities to develop specific programming, and established IT training and peer coaching programs for local teachers.

Ray received his post-secondary education in Manitoba, earning Bachelor degrees in Religious Studies, Arts and Education. He continued his studies in the '90s and earned a Master of Education in 2005.

Ray has cycled across Canada twice, and enjoys ocean kayaking, sailing, curling, fishing, snowmobiling and adventure vacations. He is heavily involved with his community.

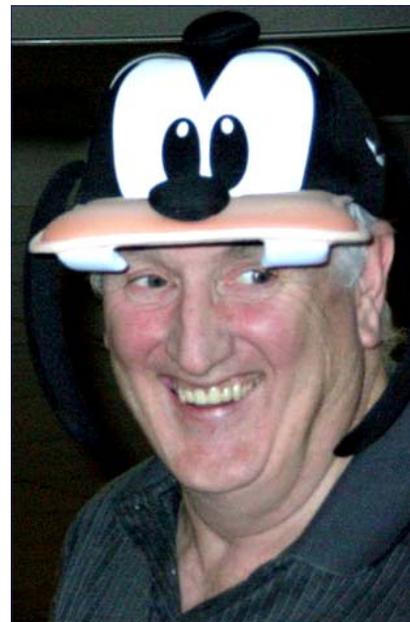


Arnie Reimer
Manitoba

Arnie retired from the St. James-Assiniboia School Division in 1996. He'd been with the division since 1967, starting as a teacher, then vice principal and principal, and became assistant superintendent of administration in 1985.

In the two years following retirement, Arnie did some work with education administration in Grenada—his first shift began in February, a nice change from a Manitoba winter. In 1998, he started a six-year stint as the executive director of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.

Arnie's son is a high school vice principal in San Francisco and his daughter is a police officer in Winnipeg. Arnie spent eight years on the board of the Mennonite Heritage Village. In his spare time, he enjoys golfing, fishing and reading.



Doug Player
British Columbia

Doug retired in 2001 after 13 years as superintendent for West Vancouver. His accomplishments include the International Student Program (which brings millions in revenue to the district), technological innovations and all-day kindergarten. As CASA's PD coordinator, he brought musician Peter Yarrow to the Nova Scotia conference. As president, Doug restructured CASA to ensure its survival as a national entity.

Doug now operates a consulting firm, Player-Works Inc. Clients include Dell, the Canadian Educational Resource Council and several school districts. He is an adjunct professor for City University, the primary educational consultant to a group developing a new university in Whistler and chief academic officer for E-Learning Desktop. He's proud of his son's and daughter's achievements, and enjoys golfing and skiing.

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Our Mission:

CASA will advance quality public education and excellence in system level leadership through advocacy and national collaboration.



Our Beliefs:

CASA believes that:

- Cultural diversity is a unique strength that enriches our nation.
- Communication and collaboration with parents and other partners is integral to successful student learning.
- Quality public education provides the best opportunity for a nation to enhance the lives of all its citizens.
- Effective system, provincial and national level leadership enables and supports excellence in teaching and learning.
- A comprehensive education, equitable and accessible to all, is the key to meeting the diverse needs and securing a successful future for our youth.

Specific strategies to advance the mission:

- Establish position papers on specific topics as they relate to the beliefs and interests of the association.
- Recruit new people.
- Establish a national representation.
- Establish a three-tier public relations and publications strategy.
- Establish a funding team to create an operating budget.

We're Looking For A Few Good People...



CASA president **Bob Mills** (left), CASA executive assistant **Gillian Van Zant** and CASA executive director **Frank Kelly** pose for a group picture at the 2004 Annual Conference in Niagara Falls.

This photograph was snapped shortly after Gillian was recognized for her distinguished service to our organization. It's people like these who help to make CASA as successful as it is today.

If there's someone whose hard work you'd like to recognize in these pages, do let us know. Contact the editor, **Tara Lee Wittchen**, by email at tarawittchen@eastlink.ca.