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LEADERS & LEARNERS

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

Inside this issue:

Message From The Executive Director	2
Directory Of CASA Regional Affiliates	2
Our Summer Leadership Conference Sponsors	3
Directory Of CASA Executive Officers & Regional Directors	6
Faces In The Crowd	7
Contribute To <i>Leaders & Learners</i>	8
Contact CASA	8
Our Mission and Our Beliefs	8

Upcoming CASA Events

- CASA members are invited to join a delegation travelling to South Africa from October 27 to November 10, 2008.
- The 2009 CASA Annual Conference will be in Calgary next July.

Message From The President: Educators Off To South Africa In The Fall

As president of CASA, I have been asked to lead a delegation of educators to South Africa next fall.

The People to People Citizen Ambassador Program was founded 50 years ago by US president **Dwight Eisenhower** with the goal of promoting peaceful relations between nations through understanding and mutual respect between individuals. Each American president, in turn, has served as honorary chair for this non-profit organization.

South Africa is a nation where warm-hearted people, great national wealth and breathtaking landscapes come together to create possibilities for the future. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has been working toward social transformation. It is clear that education for all is at the centre of this change.

Our delegation will spend time in Capetown and Johannesburg learning about the history, goals and organization of education in South Africa.

We will also discuss the opportunities and challenges of our two countries in areas such as teacher preparation, integration of tech-



Jim Gibbons
CASA president

nology, support for all learners and transition to post-secondary.

There is ample time for sight-seeing and social activities, with special tours and activities for guests. Our delegation will be able to further shape the dialogue and activities according to our own interest and expertise. The tour may be extended with a guided visit to Kruger National Wildlife Park.

The visit to South Africa will take place between October 27 to November 10. More information about this special tour can be found at www.ambassadorprograms.org. Click on "Education" and scroll down to find our delegation. I hope that you will consider this CASA mission.

In closing, allow me to thank all delegates who were able to attend the CASA summer leadership academy in Halifax.

It was indeed a conference to remember. We were so pleased to welcome participants from across the country. The theme of literacy was an engaging one for all educators and we had a wonderful selection of sessions. It was particularly heartening to note that many of you made it a family affair. There will be extensive coverage of this special time in the next issue.

Message From The Executive Director: Positive Results Through The Mentorship Experience

Mentoring is a significant assistance for supervisory officers in their demanding administrative roles today. The realization that other experienced minds can bring expertise and sound advice has proven a benefit to many new to the job.

Despite thorough preparation through courses and internship, situations and issues arise to challenge all of the background that any of us may have. This is why the support of a coach or mentor is of great value to the supervisory officer. There are many models in effect in Canadian school districts.

OPSOA operates a mentoring program in Ontario for newly appointed superintendents and directors of education. This year, there are 32 registered. The association has a former superintendent who coordinates the program, hires the mentors, organizes training sessions, and holds meetings during the year for review and input. The OPSOA model uses recently retired supervisory officers as mentors. Often, the mentor becomes a confidante, someone who keeps questions

confidential and recognizes political situations as well as the personal dilemmas. Mentors are assigned based on agreements with the district director of education. We try not to pair mentors and mentees from the same board, as our belief is that there is real benefit in an objective experience.

The association funds this program, by the board and by additional Ministry of Education funds. This three-way partnership has worked positively. Review of the program indicates a true support for new staff at the senior level.



Frank Kelly
CASA executive director

Recognize An Outstanding Colleague With The EXL Award

CASA members who show exemplary leadership ability and who enhance school administration are eligible for the EXL Award. The award, jointly sponsored by Xerox Canada Limited and CASA, has been presented since 2002.

If you work with an outstanding CASA member or know a leader in our field who deserves to be recognized, why not nominate them for the 2009 award? You can share your sug-

gestion with the executive director of your provincial association. The national award recipient is selected from the provincial nominations and is announced during the opening ceremonies at CASA's annual conference. The official nomination forms can be found on the CASA website at www.casa-acas.ca.

Full coverage of this year's award ceremony will appear in the next issue of *Leaders & Learners*.



The 2008 EXL nominees: Norm Dray, Kath Rhyason, Larry Langan, Lorna Varden, Geoff Williams.

Photo by Tara Lee Wittchen



A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.

—James Dent

Our Summer Leadership Conference Sponsors

It is thanks in part to the generous support of our sponsors that CASA is able to present such a successful annual gathering. The 2008 Summer Leadership Academy was sponsored by SMART Technologies, MDG Computers Canada Inc., Connect-ED, Pearson Canada, XEROX, Democracy 250 and Education Canada. In this series, we will learn more about three of these sponsors. Watch for further coverage of conference supporters in future issues.



Left: **Jean McHarg** and **Catherine McCullough**, the academic superintendent and the director of education for Sudbury Catholic District School Board, used the SMART Board interactive whiteboard during a breakout session at the 2008 CASA Summer Leadership Academy in Halifax.

Centre: SMART Technologies staff **Darcy Ling**, **David Lapides**, **Rod Akrigg** and **Michael Ward** were on hand to help out throughout the conference.

Right: SMART Tech's David Lapides took time between sessions to explain some of the SMART Board's many applications to CASA's executive director **Frank Kelly**.

Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen

SMART Technologies: No More Chalkboard Dust

Remember using chalkboards and flipcharts in the classroom, boardroom or conference gatherings? Remember trying to set up the overhead projector in just the right spot in the room without blocking the view for some? Remember knocking your transparencies out of order right before your presentation?

The SMART Board interactive whiteboard and related SMART Technologies products eliminate those hassles.

Founded in 1987 by partners **David Martin** and **Nancy Knowlton**, SMART began as the Canadian distributor for a US projector company.

With the revenue earned from projector sales, the company researched and developed the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. This interactive whiteboard, first introduced in 1991, allows groups to interact and instantaneously share information with people in the same room or around the world.

Some of the earliest adopters of SMART's products were

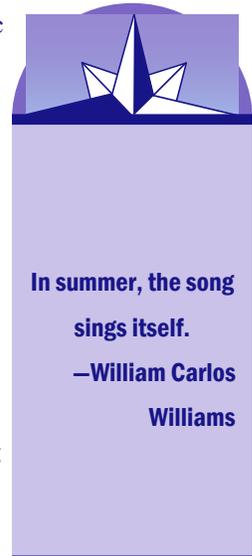
educators, particularly those teaching distance education courses.

"SMART is committed to providing all the resources and support for teachers to fully utilize SMART products and create dynamic learning activities for students," says Knowlton, CEO of SMART Technologies.

"For example, we recently launched SMART Exchange, an online community that helps educators share information, connect with colleagues and collaborate on various topics."

Today, 18 million students in more than 600,000 classrooms in more than 100 countries around the world are using SMART products including the interactive whiteboard. Over 80

(Continued on page 4)



SMART Technologies, continued

(Continued from page 3)

per cent of the top 500 US school districts use SMART products. There are almost 100 SMART Showcase Schools across North America.

Not too bad for a Calgary-based company that, in its early years, faced a great deal of financial uncertainty as it tried to fine-tune its products and convince customers to come “on board.” A big part of its success is due in part to the support of educators. Research findings from Canada, the US, the UK and Australia show that interactive whiteboards benefit student engagement, learner motivation and knowledge retention. The technology has also been successful in reaching students with a variety of learning styles, including those with special needs.

“Predictions are that one in six classrooms globally will have an interactive whiteboard by 2011,” Knowlton says. “There is strong evidence about the positive impact that these products are producing in the hands of skilled teachers: increased engagement, motivation and attendance, better behaviour and improved test scores. Teachers are also reporting that they are more productive as they add technology to their classrooms.”

SMART’s commitment to quality, service and innovation in the classroom and beyond has resulted in a number of company and product awards including Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies, Canada’s 2000 Exporter of the Year, Canada Export Award, Worldidac Award, Worldidac Quality Charter, Good Design Award of Japan, Best Overall Design Product (China) and the Comenius Medal.

The company supports technology in education by offering a variety of programs and resources through its SMARTer Kids Foundation of Canada. Since 1997, the SMARTer Kids Foundation has been bringing education technology to classrooms by initiating and sponsoring programs and research that supports students, teachers and schools.

SMART Technologies and the SMARTer Kids Foundation support the highest standards in education. The Foundation promotes the use of interactive technology in classrooms around Canada and around the world.

To get the most up-to-date information about the Foundation and to learn how your school district can access products through its education pricing program, visit the website at www.smarterkids.org.

MDG Computers Canada Inc.: Manufacturing Success

Technology is a fundamental part of modern society. It is an essential part of today’s classrooms and it can play a key role in curriculum delivery.

“As technology continues to develop and improve, the expectation that we’re delivering the curriculum at the same level puts a greater onus on school boards to embrace technology and bring it into the classroom,” says **Brian Monette**, president of MDG Computers Canada Inc.

“It’s not just buying a computer that they can have in the classroom,” he explains. “It’s taking it beyond that, it’s endorsing the technology and it’s training the teachers in it. MDG has earmarked money to provide professional development days so that we can have teachers trained and understanding the technology.”

Teachers need to know that the machines in their classrooms are going to work, he says.

“The famous quote that **Jim Grieve** [director of educa-



tion for Peel District School Board] gave me was ‘You know, Brian, teachers have in every lesson what’s called the teachable moment and that’s the critical point where they deliver that convincing blow to the students around what is important about this lesson. If using technology puts the teachable moment at risk because they don’t

rely on the technology, they’ll never use it. They can’t afford to miss that and so they won’t if the technology is not reliable.’”

Monette believes that is one way in which MDG Computers Canada Inc. makes a difference. MDG has a dedicated Peel technician workforce that responds to Peel technology issues on the same day.

“Through this partnership, we’ve actually taken a great deal of technology

(Continued on page 5)



**Deep summer is
when laziness finds
respectability.**

—Sam Keen

MDG Computers Canada Inc., continued

(Continued from page 4)

support work away from the educators and into our area of responsibility,” he says. “That allows schools to do what they do best, which is deliver the curriculum.”

MDG is the largest Canadian-owned PC manufacturer. It was established in 1991 and is headquartered in Oakville, Ontario. The company has been involved in the K to 12 and higher education market from a technology standpoint for the last 15 years.

As well as selling Canadian-manufactured desktop and notebook computers, MDG is also heavily involved in supporting public education and literacy efforts through events such as “Make a Difference in Literacy and Beyond” at Mississauga Secondary School in the Peel District School Board. As co-presenter, MDG donated \$10,000 toward making this year’s event a success.

“It’s a good partnership with Peel,” says Monette. “You get 1,200 parents who are coming to learn the best way to help their child learn.”

In that school district, he adds, teachers and administrators are working with a student body speaking roughly 59 languages.

“Think about how difficult it is when English is not your



first language, your children have to get homework done and you can’t read it. The whole subject of helping parents from a literacy standpoint really does help the students. We’ve been proud to be part of that for the last two years.”

MDG has also been working with Peel District School Board, the company’s largest customer, to help it with its technical needs for the past six years. The company has just signed a contract to work with the district for another five years.

“We have lots of pilot programs with them, and we’ve provided them with lots of different ways to test what is the best way to use technology in the classroom,” he explains. Peel has roughly 30,000 MDG computers installed within the district’s schools.

To learn more about MDG Computers Canada Inc. and its involvement with education and literacy programs across the country, visit www.mdg.ca.

Education Canada: Connecting Educators And Employers

Education Canada is the largest educational e-recruitment resource network in the country. Over 1,100 education employers such as public school districts, private educational institutions, colleges and universities frequently turn to Education Canada as an efficient, timely and cost effective method of advertising their educational employment opportunities online.

For people seeking jobs in the education field, the Education Canada Network offers the largest nationwide online database of educational employers offering positions in teaching, administration and support staff areas. Job seekers are never charged a fee to apply for jobs.

“For school boards seeking qualified employees, the Education Canada network offers advanced e-recruiting services that will improve human resources workflow and productivity,” says Mike Sproule, chief operating officer for Education Canada. “We have been helping

Canadian school boards for the past 12 years. Let us help you.”

Seventy per cent of Canada’s public schools are members, and no wonder. Education Canada is the top-ranked education job bank in Canada and sixth most popular online education job board.

To learn more about the network and how it can help you fill your staffing needs, visit www.educationcanada.com.



Directory Of CASA Executive Officers & Regional Directors

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Regional Director (Prairie)	TBA	

Additional regional affiliates will be listed in a future issue of Leaders & Learners.

CASA PEOPLE: Faces In The Crowd



Tara Lee Wittchen
Nova Scotia

Tara is the editor of *Leaders & Learners* (and the face behind *Faces In The Crowd*), a post she has held since the newsletter's inception in late 2004. She has been writing on a professional level since 1992 and has run an independent communications business since 2001.

She was raised and educated in northern Alberta. Tara received an arts degree from the University of Calgary and a journalism degree from the University of King's College in Halifax.

Tara lives with her partner Jon Hutt and their two mischievous cats Tiger and Fearka in Truro, Nova Scotia. She is an avid reader and music fan, and enjoys travelling, cooking and gardening. Tara is especially proud to have welcomed CASA summer leadership conference delegates to her adopted home of Nova Scotia.



Marion Holmes
Alberta

Marion has organized many of the finer details for CASA's conferences over the last six years. If you've been to past conferences, you know how hard this conference facilitator works behind the scenes.

She was born and raised in Calgary, and still calls that city home. Marion graduated from Forest Lawn High School, and later worked as a teacher's aide for the Calgary Board of Education. For 16 years she was a dance instructor with the city's rec department. She was also a professional dancer and a competitive gymnast. She now runs her own conference facilitating company, PD Pros.

Marion enjoys gardening, outdoor activities (and adventures—see the above photo from Alaska in 2007) and listening to music. She is the proud mother of a son and daughter, both of whom are successful actors.



Jim Brandon
Alberta

Dr. Jim Brandon is the president of the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS). He has served this organization in a variety of executive capacities over the last 22 years. He is also the deputy superintendent of Foothills School Division. His key responsibilities lie in the areas of policy, planning and people.

Previously he served as deputy superintendent of Spirit River School Division for three years. Jim was also an elementary school principal for nine years and a secondary school vice-principal for four.

Jim and his wife Terrie live in the foothills outside of Calgary. They enjoy spending time with family and friends, travelling, and sharing fine food and affordable wine. Jim is an avid reader, has finished 20 marathons, and enjoys playing "old guys" hockey and four-wall handball.

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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.

How To Put Your School Division In The Spotlight: Contribute To *Leaders & Learners*

Just as the front page of this newsletter states, *Leaders & Learners* is the voice of the Canadian Association of School Administrators. We want to hear your voice. Consider putting forth your ideas, articles and photos for future editions.

Maybe there is a success story happening in your neck of the woods and you want to share it. Perhaps there is an issue in education you would like to see discussed by a cross-country panel. You may want to share your reaction to what a panelist said at a recent CASA conference, at your provincial affiliate's meeting or at other education events. *Leaders & Learners* would like to hear about your ideas.

You don't have to worry about being a professional wordsmith to contribute. Your newsletter editor can help you. Your rough ideas can be written into full-length articles for you, and your submitted articles and photographs can be professionally edited.

Regular readers of *Leaders & Learners* know that in most issues we run a feature called "Faces In The Crowd."

It is a section in the newsletter set aside to allow our members to get to know one another a little better. This isn't always easy when CASA members are spread out across such a huge but sparsely populated country with only a few opportunities each year to meet in person. We hope that this feature helps to bridge the distances between us.

Do you know a CASA member who deserves to be in the spotlight? Is there a colleague that you would like everyone to meet? Maybe you'd even like to share your own story in a future "Faces In The Crowd." Don't be bashful! Please get in touch and share the news about your colleagues or yourself.

Regular editions of the newsletter come out six times a year, with a special double issue following the annual summer leadership academy. Give yourself at least six to eight weeks lead time if your idea is at all time sensitive.

If you have story ideas, questions, concerns or comments, please contact the editor, **Tara Lee Wittchen**, via email at tarawittchen@eastlink.ca.