

Summer 2011 Volume 6, Issue 41

Leaders & Learners

THE VOICE OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL Administrators/L'Association canadienne des administrateurs et des administratrices scolaires www.casa-acas.ca

The 2011 CASA Annual Conference: Innovation And Imagination In Niagara Falls



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iagara Falls: What a wonderful setting to host our annual gathering. From the abundant flowers on display to the delicious wine available for tasting throughout the region, from the adventure of riding right up the mist of the falls themselves to the taste extravaganza of fine dining based on local ingredients at the height of their season. On top of that, the conference featured inspiring speakers and innovative sessions throughout the week. It's always over too soon!



The natural beauty and chances for exhilarating fun were abundant in Niagara Falls. *Photos by Kath Rhyason, Frank Kelly and Ed Wittchen*





Preconference Activities: Exploring The Famous Niagara Falls From Every Angle



Above: In front of Horseshoe Falls.

Right: Susan and John Picard (with daughters Elena and Sophie) get right up front on the Maid of the Mist ride to the falls. Photos by Ed Wittchen





Right: **Kevin** and **Nicole Garinger** (left) and **Lisa** and **Bob Mills** gather round for some more snapshots.





Left: Looks like little **Surrie Pietersma** is all worn out from the excitement of Niagara Falls. Dad and Mom **Stuart** and **Trina**, however, are ready for some more.

Below: Fair warning—you will get wet!





Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will. —Vernon Howard

Preconference Activities: Fabulous Niagara Wine Country





Above: Kath Rhyason and Barry Wowk led 21 participants through a delicious wine and culinary preconference adventure in Niagara-on-the-Lake on July 6.

Above, right: New retiree (congratulations!) Barbara Gammon.

Right: Lunch at Terroir La Cachette.

Photos by Kath Rhyason



Left, below and below right: After a morning visiting Lailey Vineyard and Strewn Win-

ery, folks stopped for a three-course meal at Terroir La Cachette (known for its combination of French Provençal cooking with fine local ingredients). A tour of historic Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake and Marynissen Estates, Reif Estates Winery and other wineries followed.







Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. —Henry Ford

Preconference Activities: A Meeting And A Workshop





Left and above (from left to right): Metro Huculak, Kath Rhyason, Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells and Frank Kelly participate in the 2011 CASA executive and affiliate council meeting and AGM.

Left, top: Roger Garriock (right) of Destination ImagiNation leads participants in group activities during his preconference DI Innovation

Left, middle: Coming together to solve vignette problems and instant challenges through creativity, teamwork and thinking on one's feet.

Workshop "A World-Class Innovator...In One Day??"



Left, bottom: More fun results from the Roger Garriock-led DI Innovation Workshop group activities.







Left: What could this be? The colourful and fantastic final results of one group's work-

> shop efforts. Photos by Ed Wittchen



It is not hard to learn more. What is hard is to unlearn when you discover yourself wrong. -Martin H. Fischer

The 2011 Opening Ceremonies: Guest Speakers, Delegates And Sponsors Come Together

he 2011 CASA Annual Summer Conference opening ceremonies took place on Thursday, July 7, at the Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls—Fallsview Hotel in Niagara Falls, Ontario. CASA president **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells** welcomed delegates to the conference and to her home province.



CASA members Nick Milanetti and Theresa Harris.

Following the president's remarks, Ontario's deputy minister of education **Kevin Costante** addressed participants and their spouses and families in attendance.

Continuing with the annual tradition of having the president of the American Association of School Administrators speak at CASA's conference, current AASA president **Pat Neu-**



Cailey Crawford of the Canadian Education Association.

decker was on hand to offer an update on her activities from the past year.

Representatives from the various host affiliates spoke next, which included Tony Pontes (OPSOA) and Nick Milanetti (OCSOA). Host board representatives Warren Hoshizaki, director of education for the District School Board of Niagara, and John Crocco, director of education for the Niagara Catholic District School Board, were also on hand to welcome delegates from school districts from across the country.

Canadian Association of Principals president **Jocelyn Fournier** and **Cailey Crawford**, director of strategic partnerships for the Canadian Education Association, were also heard from.

Representatives of the conference's Platinum and Gold sponsors, including SMART Technologies, IBM, and Edline, also gave brief welcoming remarks.

SMART Technologies co-founder and CEO **Nancy Knowlton** delivered the conference's opening theme address, "21st Century Classrooms—Today!" For more on Nancy's thoughts, please see page 9.

The EXL Awards were presented next—full coverage of the awards ceremony can be found starting on page 6.

Roger Garriock delivered the evening's keynote address, entitled "Canada's National Innovation 'Blind Spot.'" You'll find more on Roger's ideas on page 12.

Following the keynote address, guests were invited to mingle at a reception in the Brock Room, sponsored by OPSOA/OCSOA and SMART.

The 2011 president of AASA, **Pat Neudecker**. Pat is also superintendent for the Oconomowoc Area School District in Wisconsin. *Photos by Ed Wittchen*





Above and below: Ontario deputy minister of education Kevin Costante and CAP president Jocelyn Fournier-Gawryluk.





You don't understand anything until you learn it more than one way. —Marvin Minsky

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Left to right: EXL Award nominee Maria Esposito (OCSOA), EXL Award national co-winner Curtis Brown (NTSA), EXL Award nominee Antonio Lacroce (AAESQ), EXL Award nominee Barbara Gammon (CASS) and EXL Award national cowinner Linda Fabi (OPSOA).

Recognizing Excellence: The 2011 CASA EXL Awards

or the first time in CASA's history, the prestigious EXL Award has been presented to two superintendents. **Curtis Brown** and **Linda Fabi** were announced as the 2011 Canadian Superintendents of the Year at this year's annual conference in Niagara Falls.

Five superintendents from across the country were nominated for the EXL Award. They include **Mario Esposito**, superintendent of education, Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board (Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association); **Barbara Gammon**, associate superintendent of learning services, Palliser Regional Schools (College of Alberta School Superintendents); **Antonio Lacroce**, former director general of the English Montreal School Board and currently with the Quebec Ministry of Education (Association of Administrators of English Schools in Quebec); Curtis Brown, superintendent, South Slave Division Education Council (Northwest Territories Superintendents' Association); and Linda Fabi, director of education, Waterloo District School Board (Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association).

Xerox representatives **Randy Brydges** and **Louis Gagnon** were on hand to present the awards on July 7. The ceremony took place in the Niagara Room at the Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls—Fallsview Hotel.

Dr. Curtis Brown has provided innovative educational leadership in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for more than 23 years. He is the 2006 recipient of the Premier's Award for Excellence, the 2009 recipient of the Premier's Award for Collaboration and the 2009 recipient of the Excellence in Education Award.

He has been instrumental in changing the culture of teach-

ing and learning in the South Slave region of the Northwest Territories. Of note especially is his work with the region's signature initiative Leadership for Literacy. This program has since been adopted by the Education Minister as a territorial pilot with the intent of serving as a model for other regions.

Throughout his career, Curtis has been a strong advocate for alternative programming and expanded opportunities for students. He also plays and coaches hockey. He and his wife, an award-winning teacher herself, have two young children. (*Continued on page 7*)



-Robert Brault

Recognizing Excellence: The 2011 CASA EXL Awards, continued

(Continued from page 6)

Linda Fabi, in addition to serving as her district's director of education, has also been the district's executive superintendent of education and superintendent of instruction. Linda is the recipient of the OPSOA President's Award and has served as that organization's president.

She is described by colleagues as an outstanding leader and is recognized for her ability to build effective relationships with others. Her accomplishments include successfully implementing the reorganization of the Waterloo Regional District School Board administration team to focus on instructional leadership and establishing a Safe and Secure Schools Steering Committee.

and as an advisor for Strong Start (a community-based early learning initiative), on the

board of directors and as committee chairperson and education advisor for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, and on the board of directors for Kitchener's The Museum.

The EXL Award has been sponsored by Xerox since 2002.





Winners receive honorary lifetime member-

ships in CASA. The Canadian Superintendent of the Year is also recognized at the annual American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Conference, where the American Superintendent of the Year is selected. The 2012 AASA Conference will take place in Houston, Texas.

Please see page 7 for coverage of the 2011 Distinguished Service Award. There were no 2011 nominees for the Honorary Life Membership Award. A list of previous award winners for all categories, going back to 1994, are

Top left: CASS nominee Barbara Gammon.

Bottom left: AAESQ nominee (AAESQ) Antonio Lacroce.

Bottom right: OCSOA nominee Mario Esposito. Photos by Ed Wittchen





Linda has also served on the board of directors Xerox representative Randy Brydges, EXL Award co-winners Curtis Brown and Linda Fabi, and Xerox representative Louis Gagnon.



The illiterate of the **21st century will not** be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. -Alvin Toffler

Recognizing Excellence: The 2011 Distinguished Service Award

t a ceremony in Toronto on Friday, September 16, the 2011 CASA Distinguished Service Award was presented to the organization's professional development/communications director.

Ed Wittchen received the award for his leadership within the CASA organization as the professional development committee chair for the past few years. Special recognition was voiced for his arrangement of the national forum that brought together the CASA executive and pan-Canadian affiliates to plan the next three to five years for CASA.

"The College of Alberta School Superintendents thanks Ed for his efforts to broaden our understanding of Canadian education and for his enabling of the many networks we enjoy today. Alberta is richer for it," said CASS executive director **Kath Rhyason** in a statement released after the ceremony. Ed has spent his entire career in public education in Alberta, and as CASA PD director, he has organized 10 successful summer conferences.

Ed Wittchen is an education consultant for the Alberta School Boards Association and superintendent of Mother Earth's Children's Charter school, Canada's only Indigenous charter school. He was superintendent of Northern Lights School Division (the former Lakeland Public School Division) from 1992 to 2007. Since 1971, he has been a teacher, coach, principal and assistant superintendent. He has also taught Masters-level courses for San Diego State and Royal Roads universities.



CASA president **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells** presented the 2011 Distinguished Service Award to professional development/communications director **Ed Wittchen** at a ceremony in Toronto on September 16.

Photo by Frank Kelly

He is the recipient of the 2001 Alberta Lieutenant Governor's Award, the 2004 CASA and AASA Canadian Superintendent of the Year Award, and numerous leadership, coaching and community service awards. Ed enjoys reading, following sports (especially baseball) and collecting sports memorabilia, writing on chuckwagon racing and playing with his two grandchildren.

Join Ed and the rest of the CASA team at the 2012 conference in Whistler from July 5 to 7.

Strategic Planning Meeting In Toronto

embers of CASA's executive and affiliates met in Toronto on September 15 and 16 for a strategic planning meeting. The organization's strengths, challenges, priorities and themes were reviewed. Plans for moving forward were discussed. Input came from representatives of provincial and territorial



Affiliate members from NLADE, MASS, OPSOA and NWTSA. Photos by Ed Wittchen

affiliates as well as the executive.

Watch for a feature article detailing the discussions that took place at this gathering in the next issue of *Leaders & Learners*.





Learning without thought is labor lost. —Confucius

Twenty-first Century Classrooms—Today!: Nancy Knowlton On Technology And Education

Part of the 2011 conference opening ceremonies included an address by **Nancy Knowlton**, co-founder and chief executive officer of SMART Technologies. Nancy spoke on the topic of "21st Century Classrooms—Today!"

Nancy was appointed SMART Technologies president and CEO in June 2007, and CEO of SMART's main operating subsidiary in January 2007. She has been a director of the company or its predecessors since 1987.

Recognized as one of Canada's top businesswomen, Nancy was the 1999 Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year in the Export category. She was awarded the 1999 Prairies Region Technology Entrepreneur of the Year Award, sponsored by Ernst and Young, and a Manning Innovation Award in 2002. Nancy received the TeleSpan Pace Award in 2006, which honours teleconferencing professionals who make more than a decade of contributions to the industry. In 2006, she was named Best Canadian Entrepreneur by the Stevie Awards.

She has published numerous articles and has delivered keynote addresses at many national and international events, including the 2007 International Council on Education for Teaching, the 2008 Global Education Technology Summits (in Germany, Cairo and Colombia) and Digital Learning India 2008.

Nancy has received honorary doctorate degrees from Bishop's University and Saint Mary's University. Before founding SMART, Nancy taught accounting and computer science at Saint Mary's.

In this Q&A feature with *Leaders & Learners*, Nancy shares some of her thoughts on how educational leaders can work toward integrating today's technology into Canadian classrooms.

Your address at the 2011 CASA conference in Niagara Falls focused on successful integration strategies for using interactive whiteboards and related technology products in everyday teaching and learning. Would you share some of those key strategies with our readers?

Here are some of the integration strategies that we have seen work:

- Start with a vision about how the use of interactive whiteboards is going to transform teaching and learning. A vision helps everyone get aligned and it sets expectations.
- Then ensure that teachers have the continuous professional development that they need in order to confidently begin to use the products every day.
- Choose good early users. Teachers who embrace technology and show positive developments with their students will inspire others.
- Engage the entire community—all stakeholders in the education of students need to be informed and appreciate what the implementation program entails and the anticipated results. This includes teachers, students,

parents and administrators.

- Include the learners in the adoption. Include them in some of the PD activities so that they can support their teachers.
- Consider the whole cost of adoption including digital resources for teachers and students.

What steps can educational leaders (such as CASA members) take to successfully integrate interactive whiteboards and related products into the classroom? What challenges might they face and how can SMART Technologies help with those challenges?

The same strategies that are itemized above are applicable to districts and schools across Canada. Beyond that, decisions around standardization on certain products and solutions can be cost effective over the long run.

(Continued on page 10)



The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn. —John Lubbock

Twenty-first Century Classrooms—Today!: Nancy Knowlton On Technology And Education, cont'd

(Continued from page 9)

The point about vision for learning with technology cannot be emphasized enough. The reality is that the education that many of us received isn't good enough for today's students when competition for jobs is truly global. We need students with 21st century skills that emphasize creativity, collaboration and communication-all of which can be enhanced and developed through the use of technology in the learning process.

At SMART we are both connected to what's happening today and creating new products, services and resources that will help teachers and students in the future.

Our commitment to our customers is that we are here for the long run to help with the adoption of our products and to continue to innovate with new and upgraded products.

What do you see as the key benefits of incorporating technology like the interactive whiteboard into Canadian classrooms? What benefits can this technology bring specifically to students? To teachers?

Dozens of research studies have been conducted around the world on the impact of interactive whiteboards on teachers and students.

It is clear that when introduced with appropriate professional development and resources available to teachers and students, a whiteboard offers numerous benefits including

a visually engaging way to access and share digital materials

"Engage the entire community. This includes teachers, students, parents and administrators."



SMART Technologies. Photo courtesy of SMART Technologies

an opportunity for students to take the lead in demonstrating, explaining, teaching

- improved student engagement and motivation
- better attendance and in-class behaviour
- a faster pace of instruction, allowing more time for smallgroup and individual work
- reduced teacher anxiety around the integration and use of technology in the classroom

These are challenging economic times and school boards are under pressure to watch budgets carefully. How can staff at schools and school boards with

limited technology funds make the most of SMART Technologies products?

An interactive whiteboard is an easy way to bring computers into the classroom, even when it isn't possible to put one into every student's hands. The teacher's computer becomes the classroom computer, allowing the full class to explore and understand together.

Suggest some strategies for them to get the biggest bang for their buck.

Spend the time and money on teacher professional development. There is nothing more expensive than a product that isn't used at all or used well.

Get teachers and students engaged in the creation of digital resources that can saved and reused. This can start districts down the path to a full digital resources strategy.

(Continued on page 11)



I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn. -Albert Einstein

Twenty-first Century Classrooms—Today!: Nancy Knowlton On Technology And Education, cont'd

(Continued from page 10)

You've been with this company since its start in 1987. What are some of your personal favourite observations of watching SMART Technologies' products being used and embraced by students, teachers and educational leaders?

teract with so many educational leaders at one time?

It's important for me to be able to share the SMART vision to groups like CASA, because our products are rapidly evolving and expanding. We want to make sure that our customers know that we are working hard on their behalf.

"Choose good early users. Teachers who embrace technology and show positive developments with their students will inspire others."

Teachers and administrators tell us about higher levels of student engagement and motivation and that their attendance rates have been higher after our products have been introduced. They cite research that shows improvement in student outcomes.

Students tell us that they feel the use of our products better matches their learning interests and style. Students also talk to us about our products being fun in the classroom.

The bottom line is that our products are making a difference and that's the thing that is so motivating for all of us.

SMART Technologies has been the primary corporate sponsor of the CASA conference for the past four years. Why do you personally feel this is a beneficial relationship to develop?

There is nothing more valuable than face-to-face engagement with customers. It allows us to gain an intimate understanding of the needs and issues at hand. We continue to believe that the CASA conference is a great venue for direct conversations in a relaxed environment.

What benefits do you receive from this opportunity to in-

Nancy Knowlton was on hand to deliver the CASA conference opening theme address on Thursday, July 7, in the Niagara Room at the Crowne Plaza in Niagara Falls.

Photo by Ed Wittchen

What were you able to take back "home" to the company with you following this year's conference?

I am always looking for customer insights and that is the most valuable piece of information that I can bring back to the company. Whether it is a question or a statement, I always find something of value in what people share with me.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us, Nancy, and for your continued support of public education in Canada.





Retention is best when the learner is involved.

-Edward Scannell

Roger Garriock On Exploring Innovation Strategies

Roger Garriock started off the 2011 CASA conference on July 7 with a full-day fun and interactive preconference workshop on becoming a world-class innovator...in one day. Roger also presented the conference's keynote address later that evening on the topic of Canada's national innovation blind spot, as well as a breakout session on Friday afternoon called "Cultivating Creativity and Teamwork in your Classrooms."

Roger is the director of Canadian operations at Destination ImagiNation, Inc. His past experience includes a 32-year career with IBM, where he was involved in executive assignments in almost every division of the corporation. He played a key leadership role in the reinvention of IBM during the early 1990s. Roger has also been very active in his volunteer life, sitting on more than 18 non-profit boards across Canada and numerous business advisory councils.

Since retiring from IBM, Roger has been helping Destination ImagiNation, Inc., where he played a key role in helping launch DIcor, the corporate consulting/education division. More recently, Roger has been working closely with senior officials from the federal and provincial governments, plus numerous business and education leaders from across the country, to help launch Destination ImagiNation across Canada. Roger has a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of Toronto.

Here Roger shares some of his innovative ideas with Leaders & Learners.



Roger Garriock, director of Canadian operations at Destination ImagiNation, Inc. Photo courtesy of Destination ImagiNation

In terms of innovation strategies in education in Canada, what has been tried in the past that has not worked?

If you took a hard look at our current k-12 education system here in Canada, you would readily agree that over the past half century, "fundamental change" has been a challenge. It is still very much fashioned after the Industrial Revolution model, with standardized testing the norm, individual

results the focus versus team, memorization and regurgitation standard practices, the agrarian calendar with summers off with little or no focus or time spent on developing higher level skills including communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity, or what has been characterized "the four Cs."

Over the past 18 months, I have had the opportunity to meet with more than half of Canada's superintendents, directors, and directeur generales of education. When asked to comment, they stated "We're educating the creativity out of children...they're afraid to take risks...they think there is only one right answer...they have limited if any team skills...success is measured only by grade point average...we're doing a poor job in developing the KEY skills they need for the 21st century economy."

Additionally, our universities are adding fuel to the fire by using grade point average as often the only measure for university admissions.

How do we make improvements?

One summed it up best: "We need to add the four Cs creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication—to the three Rs."

Why is it important for educators, particularly those focused on the k-12 grade levels, to incorporate innovation strategies in the classroom?

Here in Canada, our national innovation strategy doesn't click into high gear until the post-graduate level, with billions of dollars having been invested by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation since its formation in 1997. Yet we continue to fall behind.

Why isn't k-12 curriculum part of the national innovation dialogue? One superintendent commented "To use a hockey analogy, it would be like giving Sidney Crosby hockey (*Continued on page 13*)



The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes. —Marcel Proust

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Roger Garriock On Exploring Innovation Strategies, cont'd

(Continued from page 12)

equipment at age 21 and asking him to become a worldclass hockey player overnight! He started at age 3. K-12 has to be part of Canada's innovation strategy."

Where does the path to innovation begin?

Curriculum reform must remain Canada's number one education priority, but shorter term solutions must also be found that are cost effective, scalable, politically acceptable, complementary to the curriculum and agreeable to all the stakeholder groups.

Programs like Destination ImagiNation, the world's largest non-profit creative problem-solving program for k-12 youth, will continue to play a key role in Canada's educational strategy while these needed reforms take place.

Now in its 27th year, Destination ImagiNation helps young people discover their true creative potential, and fills the skill gaps that might be overlooked in the classroom. Children learn how to become better team players, communicators, problem solvers, presenters, researchers, budgeters and, most importantly, learn how to think "outside the box," all while becoming world-class innovators.

Typically offered as an afterschool/parent-driven program (but with more and more focus moving DI right into the classroom in places like Manitoba), teams of up to seven participants (elementary, middle and high school students) work together for an hour or two a week over several months to create solutions to exciting team challenges. These challenges can have a scientific, technical, structural, theatrical, improvisational or current events focus. New challenges are developed each year by teams of dedicated volunteers that help bring the best out of children and never let them get bored.

Teams also learn and practise creative quick thinking skills for the instant challenge portion of the program, where they will have just five or six minutes to solve a challenge they have never seen before.

The Destination ImagiNation program is a process-based program grounded in well-established creative problemsolving theory. It helps young people build lifelong skills in a fun, cost-effective and supportive environment.

What steps can education leaders and stakeholders, including government and parents, take today to encourage innovation in Canadian classrooms?



Roger Garriock preparing for his presentation at the CASA conference in Niagara Falls this summer. Photo by Ed Wittchen

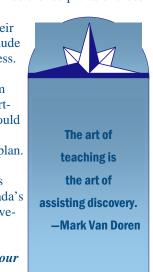
Much needs to be done...and quickly. Some suggested actions:

- The federal government has to include k-12 in the national innovation dialogue—and now!
- Every ministry of education should have 21st century skill development as their number one priority, with an ADM appointed to help drive the agenda.
- Parents need to understand the challenge, and advocate for change, even though it may conflict with how and what they were taught.
- Every school district in the country should have a 21st century learning plan, with a pilot program starting this fall.
- Business/industry needs to be actively engaged in the process of reform, as they will be the recipients of these changes.
- Universities must broaden their entrance requirements to include alternative measures of success.

And lastly, the children's program that I have the privilege of supporting, Destination ImagiNation, should be a key part of every school district's 21st century development plan.

Combining the 4 Cs with the 3 Rs will be key to strengthening Canada's long-term international competitiveness.

Thank you, Roger, for sharing your ideas and enthusiasm with us.



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Leaders Sharing Ideas On 21st Century Learning: Breakout Sessions At The 2011 Conference



Above: **Rob Wicker** and **Samear Abougouche** present on community partnerships.

Right: **Peter Joshua** from Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.





Right: **Ruth Snyder** (left) from Northern Lights School Division and **Susan Picard** from Grande Prairie Public School District .

Left: A session led by Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board staff.





Below: David George talks about character education

Left: Tom D'Amico of the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

and leadership development as 21st century learning. Photos by Ed Wittchen





l think, therefore I am. —Descartes

CASA PEOPLE: Famous Last Words (And Pictures)



Left: Exploring Niagara Falls on foot.

Right, top: Raincoats are a must-have when you get this close to Horseshoe Falls.

Right, below: CASA participants and their families at the top of Horseshoe Falls.



Barry Wowk, CASA Western Regional Director and superintendent of St. Albert Protestant Schools, rides on the *Maid of the Mist* with the Rainbow Bridge and Niagara River rapids behind him.



The beautiful, world-famous Horseshoe Falls.





Photos by Ed Wittchen

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