

Teacher Wants to Start Children's TV program

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The **Detroit** **Teacher**

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OCTOBER 2008

Weingarten Visits DFT, Analyzes Education Crisis

AFT President Randi Weingarten came to Detroit Sept. 27 and discussed the state of the nation and the Detroit schools with the DFT executive board.

Weingarten said it was watching the Republican National Convention that made her think. The Republicans, she said, blamed teachers and unions for the state of education.



Photo by Ricardo Thomas

"They were really on message," she said. "All of a sudden we are what's ailing America. It is as close to

blaming the victim or blaming the worker as anyone has ever said."

Weingarten said she saw a classic case of deflecting responsibility for the ills that the Bush administration has filtered through the system.

"People end up blaming you because they don't want to fix it," Weingarten told the teachers.

She said it's an easy way to deflect criticism for their responsibility to fund the educational system. In the last eight years, she said, the country funded war and Wall Street, not jobs and education.

Weingarten castigated Bush's performance on national TV for scaring the nation about the banking crisis based on his own irresponsibility.

The new AFT chief also said she sees many urban school districts ailing. The recession has hurt job prospects.

And with the loss of jobs goes population loss. She said the AFT has started an "Innovation Fund" to lend support and expertise to districts.

Teachers React to Crisis

Detroit schools — along with their public perception — may be veering toward the cliff. The continual talk about lack of textbooks and oversized classrooms has taken hold.

Who would want to send their kids here?

Ivy Bailey, a DFT executive board member, says that's what may be causing the lack of faith in the system, along with the continual financial crises, that thwarts improvement.

Bailey and other DFT members want to remedy this perception and save the district from demise.

That's why they formed a Call to Action Committee to bring together school, business, city and state leaders to save the district.

"We are in a crisis mode and we all are suffering," said Bailey. "This is really the time we can all come together and do something positive. We're at the state where we need to stop the fighting, put aside special interests, and save our public schools and our children's education."

The committee met twice to organize and is holding its first public forum on Oct. 16 at Frederick Douglass High School (formerly Murray Wright High School).

"Our people do not understand that our district is in crisis and do not understand the importance of having 100,000 children in our schools," said Elder Amen-Ra Heru, a committee member. "Detroit schools do not need intervention. Your jobs are on the line."

Other committee members are seeking differing opinions on the scope of the problem.

"I think it's important to hear from the parents who aren't in Detroit Public Schools," said committee member Mary Helen D'Angelo.

"The charters are giving people something we're not giving them and that's what we need to hear," said Steve Portnoy, a 20-year school psychologist.

"We're always the victim," Portnoy said. "But nobody cares about the victim. People just want the best for their kids. They won't send their kids here to get to 100,000."

"The whole point is to get the parents to want to bring their children back. We need to be bigger, better and bolder. We can do things no one else can do."



Pictured above are members of the Crisis Committee — left to right: Steve Portnoy, Mary Helen D'Angelo and Chairperson Ivy Bailey.

DPS Finances: The Year of Living Dangerously *Bad News Delivered at Membership Meeting*

"I have bad news, bad news, somewhat good news, and then terrible news."

That's how Patrick Falcusan, financial analyst for the DFT, summed up the district's financial state for a somber membership at its Sept. 11 meeting.

The dismal news was confirmed a week later when the state superintendent ordered a review of the district's funds.

First the good news: The district finally hired an auditor. This hopefully will appease the State of Michigan, which threatened to cut off funds to the district in December if an audit was not complete by the deadline.

The bad news: the district is on track to have \$1.5 billion in expenses for the

year, but only \$1.1 billion in revenues. Although teachers are relieved to have their 2.5 percent wage increase, fifth prep periods restored and rescinded layoffs, this will add to the budget shortfall.

The biggest part of the budget reduction was the elimination of about 1,700 jobs (800 of those from the DFT).

"The district to date did not really follow through with the elimination of a large number of jobs and other remedies outlined in the 2008-09 budget," he said. Most of the laid off teachers were recalled.

At this pace of spending, the district could be broke by March or April, Falcusan said.

"And that's not the worst of it," he said. "We were not successful in keeping the cap on charter schools" if the district's population fell below 100,000 this year. And the student count fell below 90,000 this year. Therefore, more charter schools will be allowed to open within city borders next year, which would further siphon students from our schools. An estimated 45,000 former DPS students are in charter schools to date.

For the loss of every 10,000 students, the district loses nearly \$100 million in foundation and grant monies.

"We are at a crucial, crucial point," he said. "During the next 12 months the viability of the union, of the school district as you know it, is in question."

Let's Keep Up the Fight for Kids

It's time for everyone to step up and fight for the funding we really need to fully educate our children. Today I find it even more crucial to fight to keep our people. As this paper goes to print, I learned that 40 social workers were laid off.



Virginia Cantrell

President's Report

For too long, we have stood by and waited for Lansing to send the funding we really need to do the job we have been charged to do. There hasn't been a meaningful change in state education funding in more than two decades. We need to DEMAND a state budget that allocates money for programs that data has proven to raise student achievement. That is: smaller classes, clean and safe schools, meaningful professional development, and an increase in early childhood education.

We need to maintain the ranks of our teachers and support staff of social workers, psychologists, ed techs, compact techs and school nurses.

We must demand that the foundation years pre-kindergarten through third grade be greatly improved and expanded. If we get it right in the first five years, we won't have the dropout rate in the last four years that we have now.

Every DFT member knows how desperately we need additional resources in our schools. Every day we are faced with trying to live up to the federal No Child Left Behind act, with unrealistic expectations and punitive sanctions.

We need to demand the resources for our children to master the skills they will need to compete in a global, technology-driven future.

Our children must be proficient in reading and math in order to succeed.

Helping our children to meet the NCLB target will be impossible without the necessary funding to provide the resources needed to implement programs that will help us to do so. We no longer can fight to keep one program and let another be cut in order to keep what we know helps us to meet the educational needs of our children.

We must continue to demand that the redundant and excessive paperwork required be reduced, leaving more time for teachers to teach. We will no longer

stand by and try to do more with less.

We must demand that DPS makes every school a place where every parent wants to send their child and every teacher wants to work – one that not only educates every child but educates the “whole” child.

We have been promised year after year by lawmakers “When I get into office, I will do something about the funding for public schools.” Year after year we start

school asking the same thing, “Where are the books?” We need books and supplies and the necessary tools to do our job. We need smaller class size so teachers can give individual attention to students who need extra help.

This is a wake up call to action.

It's time. It's past time. You, the lawmakers, do what you promised you would do – support and properly fund public education. Our teachers educate all of our children. Our future is at stake. We must and we will protect our public education, our children, our future.

Keep the promise.



Photo by Ricardo Thomas

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, with Detroit Federation of Teachers President Virginia Cantrell, visited the DFT on September 27.

Do You Have News at Your School?

Do you have a great idea for a story for The Detroit Teacher? Or the DFT website? Well, let us know.

The Detroit Teacher accepts articles of 300 words or less. And announcements are placed daily on the DFT website.

To submit articles, send a brief story describing the event or person. Remember to include the five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why. Whether you are writing about a student, a DFT member, or an event, please include the names of the participants and, where

appropriate, their grade levels or job classification. Include first and last names of all those involved. Include your name and phone numbers where you can be reached in the daytime.

DO NOT, DO NOT, DO NOT send Polaroid pictures. They will not be used. Digital camera photos are acceptable if the image is sharp and clear.

Photo Tips: When taking a picture, do not stand more than 8 feet from the subject. Unless you are a professional photographer, do not try to get a shot of your entire class. The faces will be lost. Do

not pose subjects directly in front of a blackboard, a white wall or metallic lockers. Be creative. Take photos of people in action. Take lots of photos; the more you take, the better your chances of getting a good shot.

Articles and photos can be mailed to: The Detroit Teacher, 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202. We can not guarantee the photos will be returned. Articles and photos can be emailed to the paper c/o mweertz@dft231.com. Please send photos as an attachment to the email and send it in jpeg format.

Visit the DFT Web site

www.DFT231.com

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Editor — Margaret Weertz

Updates

Retirements Announced

The following DFT members retired this year: Marilyn Andreini, Edith Boswell, Therese Martin, Delores Moore, Linda Slater, Delores Stanford, Iva Fordham, Deborah Hairston, Barbara Hale, Janice Hull, Charles Lietzau, Howard Little, Gloria Noble, Madonna Ramsey-Carter, Barbara Smith, Mary Smith, Phyllis Smith-Young, and Margaret Williams.

Retiree Rakes in Community Honors for Service



Dr. Arthur Divers

Pin one more medal on Dr. Arthur Divers' chest.

Divers, a retired 43-year Detroit teacher and assistant principal, reached the highest level in the Scottish Rite Freemasonry.

Divers received the distinction — the 33rd Degree of Freemasonry

— at a May ceremony in Cincinnati.

Divers was among 247 men to reach the final elite level of the international society of brotherliness and charity. To reach the level, you must be nominated and cannot petition for the honor. The level represents humility, not putting oneself above others but becoming a leader or role model for your community.

"It was an exhilarating experience because you know you are in a select group of men," Divers said.

Add that to Divers' other awards. Divers was honored in 2006 by the Governor's Honor Roll for volunteer service. He won the Cor Plus Award from the Junior League of Detroit in 2004, and the Spirit of Detroit honor by the Detroit City Council in 2003.

Christmas Bazaar

Shop early for the holidays. Vendors will display their Christmas wares on Saturday, Nov. 22 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the DFT office, 2875 W. Grand Blvd. Tables are available to vendors for \$50 each on a first come basis.

For more info, call Sandra Ambrose, Samele Ambrose or Sidney Lee at 875-3500 ext. 779.



New Board for Retirees

The Retirees Chapter elected a new board: (from left) Richard Berlin, recording secretary; Jewel Gines, chair; Virginia Stanch, social chair; Barbara Ward, vice chair; Dr. Arthur Divers, program chair.

DFT Members Must Update Information

If you have moved over the summer, even if you notified DPS of your address change, you must notify the DFT of your new address too. Please use the following form and return it by Oct. 27 the DFT office by fax (313-875-3511) or by mail to 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202.

Name: _____

File #: _____

School: _____

New home address: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone: _____
 cell or home (circle)

Why Should I Vote?

By Michael Guyton

I recently asked a younger cousin of mine if she was registered to vote and if she knew how to vote. I was surprised to hear a 25-year-old woman confess to me that she had never voted, she never really bothered or never thought about voting.

So I began to question her on her reason for never voting. She replied to me, "Why should I vote? My vote's not going to count anyway, so why waste the time voting?"

My first reaction was anger. But I began to tell her how important having the right to vote is. I explained to her how people sacrificed their lives, struggled and fought just for her to have the equal right as a woman and an American of color to cast a vote. I began to tell her about a book I read entitled "Red River" by Lalita Tademy (2001).

Red River is a mix of family history, fiction and fact. In 1873 in the small southern town of Colfax, Louisiana, blacks were newly free from slavery, beginning life under Reconstruction, with promises of equality, the right to vote and own property, and most important, the right to decide their own future as individuals.

The residents of Colfax were planning to vote against the politicians in office. They were prepared to vote in new leadership that would help them secure their rights as people. The opposition knew that with the black vote counted, they would lose the election so they sent the

southern supremacists to stop any person of color from voting.

The federal government sent troops to protect the people of Colfax as they voted. But sadly they didn't show up in time.

That wretched day, the residents of Colfax were massacred in an ugly and violent manner because supremacists of that time did not believe blacks or women should be allowed certain rights, especially the right to vote. The confrontation resulted in the deaths of more than 100 black men and women by the southern supremacists who were bent on denying them their voting rights and keeping those politicians in office who upheld the status quo prior to the Civil War.

So when you say, "Why should I vote," I want you to close your eyes and think about the massacre of Colfax, Louisiana. Think about the women who suffered and died just for the constitutional right. Think about the leaders who put it all on the line just for your right to vote.

As we approach one of the most important elections in American history, I hope you understand that it is your duty and honor to stand in line and cast your vote — a right for which your ancestors died.

By the way, I'm proud to say that my cousin has registered to vote and will cast her vote on Nov. 4. Will you?

Michael Guyton is an avid reader and DFT employee.

Reconstituted Ford High School Opens with Pomp



DFT President Virginia Cantrell (from left) visits with the Open House committee Kathryn Orsutt, Carol Pavelich, Shiffne Clark, Shahidah Muta, assistant principal Lisa Robinson, and principal Sharon Dennis.

Henry Ford High School, reconstituted this year, opened with a new staff bounding with energy. The school held a standing-room only open house — the first in five years.

“This is a really good turnout,” said Assistant Principal Lisa Robinson. “This shows our parents care.”

DFT President Virginia Cantrell congratulated the staff and parents for starting the year on a positive note.

“I know this is a great way to showcase your school because we have great things going on in the public schools and we don’t publicize it,” Cantrell said. “Starting the year off with this much enthusiasm and hard work is great. I can see it.”



HOODIE AWARD WINNERS - Three of Detroit Public Schools’ finest were winners at this year’s Hoodie Awards, sponsored by radio personality Steve Harvey. The awards ceremony held in Las Vegas Sept. 20 honors local business, religious and community leaders for their contributions to their neighborhoods. Southeastern High School teacher Nadonya Muslim, above left, pictured with DFT member Cynthia Pearson-Matthews, was voted “Best High School Teacher.” Cass Tech was voted “Best High School” for the second year in a row. And Raphael B. Johnson, a Cass Tech graduate, won Best Community Leader and received a \$40,000 Ford Flex.

Detroit

NEWS

Kettering Teacher Reconstru

Every summer Wanda Fenderson’s classroom turns into another place and time.

Last summer, the Titanic sailed in. Fenderson’s special needs students at Kettering West Wing were able to feel the hull and peer inside the ballroom with its massive chandelier.

Another summer, she constructed a life-size Model T.

“I tied it in with the Henry Ford Museum so they could actually see it and get a hands-on idea of what it looked like -- instead of on paper,” she said.

Another summer, Fenderson’s theme was the Medieval Period. Soon she started constructing a castle. There was also the Native American tepee and the rocket ship.

For these extraordinary thematic units and more, Fenderson is being honored with the 57th Arc

Detroit Teacher of the Year Legacy Award. The award honors a teacher who shows special dedication in working with students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The Arc Detroit serves Detroit, Highland Park and Hamtramck and is a chapter of the national Association for Retarded Citizens.

Fenderson has been working with special needs students for 17 years. She knows the importance of getting students to grasp things, and that means hands on activities. She wants them to learn the simplest of tasks.

For Edward, it means not leaving his desk for lunch until all of his pencils are picked up and the chairs pushed in.

“You see improvement,” she says. “It may not seem like a lot but to you it is. Later on you realize they’re listening to you more than you thought. You see them



Teacher makers

acts History for Her Students

using the skill. Or sometimes they're repeating you or mimicking you."

While Fenderson doesn't seek the limelight for her good works,

the award confirms that her work is important and has touched many children.

"Just the thought that maybe I helped them is great."



Wanda Fenderson (pictured above and on the left) is always smiling while she works with her students at Kettering West Wing.

Social Workers Honored for Their Vision

Ten years ago, four Detroit school social workers were invited to bring some of their underprivileged students with vision problems to a Lenscrafters store.

"We had such pleasant experiences," said Marie Hamilton. "They treated our children so well."

Lenscrafters had the kind of corporate culture that was generous and started working in the community. The eyewear chain established a Gift of Sight program.

"We took our children because it was a resource we could all tap into," Hamilton said.

Ten years later, more than 11,000 kids have been serviced with eye exams, referrals and glasses.

"I had a kid who saw the clock and started screaming," Hamilton said.

"After they get a pair of glasses, they say, 'Look there's a bird outside.'"

Vision at 20/20 opens the world to these children. But it took the four women to work the program each year, identify children in need, and build the other side of that partnership.

For helping to build this towering program, Hamilton, Hollie Pena and Mary Ellen Bell have been honored as 2008 School Social Workers of the Year by the Michigan Association of School Social Workers. The fourth pioneer of the program — Joyce Jones — died in 2005. The three women also have been honored with the Quality of Life award by MASSW — only the second time in the organization's history it has been given.

Although they are being honored for their desire to do more for their students, the social workers can't say enough about Lenscrafters.

"It's an awesome corporate culture," Pena said. "Their corporate culture is all about giving." Since those early days, the program has spread to benefit kids in Taylor, Inkster, River Rouge, Hamtramck and Highland Park.

In one traumatic case, the social workers saw a 14-year-old girl who had been shot in the eye. She was a foster child and an infection invaded the eye.

"This is going to be a difficult one," thought Bell. But before the girl left that day, she was referred to a doctor, placed on antibiotics, received new clothing, and had arrangements to receive a prosthesis.

The social workers were such an integral part of the Gift of Sight program that Lenscrafters invited them in 2003 to San Felipe, Mexico and in 2004 to Tijuana, Mexico to help service children with vision problems.

"It was heart-wrenching," Bell said. "We went to work first thing in the morning. The line was already formed. They were standing quietly waiting for us.

"It was a humbling experience."



School social workers Mary Ellen Bell, Marie Hamilton and Hollie Pena were honored for addressing children's vision problems.

School Social Worker Succeeds as Artist

In the daytime, Leonard Zabawski is a school social worker at Turning Point Academy on Detroit's east side. In his other life, he's an ink and water color artist.



Leonard standing with one of his paintings.

Zabawski opened an art exhibit in September at University Liggett School's Manoogian Arts Wing, 1045 Cook Road in Grosse Pointe Woods. The

exhibit, running until Oct. 11, showcases his 10-year study of lighthouses.

"I've always been an artist," Zabawski says. His childhood friend, who remembers him drawing cartoons in high school, says the differ-



ence between a real artist and an amateur is continuity.

"Artists actually work at it," Dagmar Avolio said at the exhibit.

Indeed, Zabawski travels the country for lighthouses — and lately historical buildings — and inks and colors them in one sitting. His work is

not done in a studio but in front of the building, sitting for hours at a time.

To date, Zabawski has painted more than 140 lighthouses from around the country. Before demolition, he was able to draw Tiger Stadium this summer. Also this summer, he drew abolitionist John Brown's historic fort at Harpers Ferry in West Virginia.

Zabawski, an activist against privatization in public schools, gave a talk to Liggett upper school art students on technique and method. After hundreds of drawings, Zabawski has advice for art students:

"Shut up and paint."

He says, "It's sometimes hard. You have to force yourself to paint. But it's like the Nike commercial, just do it."

Zabawski's lighthouses are available in a 2009 calendar sold at Michigan Made & More in Plymouth, Canton Vintner Cellars, and Grosse Pointe Art Center.

Grants

Teaching Tolerance

Teaching Tolerance grants support projects to reduce prejudice among young people, improve inter-group relations in schools or support educator professional development. This grant is funded by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Grants of up to \$2,500 go to classroom teachers who design projects that aim to reduce prejudice. Deadline: ongoing. For more info, contact <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/grants/guide.jsp>.

Teaching Citizenship

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) honors elementary, junior and high school teachers who promote citizenship education with awards up to \$1,000. Colleagues, parents or supervisors may nominate deserving teachers who promote students' interest in America's history, traditions, institutions, civic responsibility, flag etiquette, and patriotism. Deadline: Nov. 1, 2008. For info, visit <http://www.vfw.org>.

Literacy Teaching

The International Reading Association's (IRA) Nina Banton Smith Award recognizes (with a \$1,000 award) middle or secondary classroom teachers who translate theory and current research into practice for developing content area literacy. Nominees must be current classroom teachers in grades 7-12 and IRA members. Deadline: Nov. 15, 2008. For info, visit <http://www.reading.org/association>.

Character Education

The Character Education Partnership offers annual awards of up to \$10,000 to schools that have engaged in character education for at least three years. Deadline: Dec. 8, 2008. Contact: <http://www.character.org/nsoc>.

Excellent Elementary Teachers

The International Reading Association (IRA) will honor a language arts/reading teacher who works directly with students in a classroom setting. The Eleanor M. Johnson Award will go to someone who has been teaching language arts or reading for at least five years and are IRA members. Deadline: Nov. 15, 2008. For info, visit http://reading.org/association/awards/teachers_johnson.html.

Safety, Economic Education and Tolerance

The Allstate Foundation supports programs that fit three areas of focus: safe and vital communities; economic empowerment; and tolerance, inclusion and diversity. The foundation makes grants that align with its focus areas. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit <http://allstate.com/foundation>.

Learn About Space

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is offering a free educational resource for educators want-

ing to teach students with disabilities about space. A downloadable, 48-page brochure provides useful information for science, technology, engineering and math teachers who are working with students with disabilities.

To find out more and download the brochure, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/topnav/materials/listbytype/Space_Science_Is_for_Everyone.html.

Math Grants

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) is supporting middle school math teachers with funds up to \$8,000. NCTM's Mathematics Education Trust (MET) is accepting applications from middle school math teachers to incorporate materials and teaching methods that will improve achievement levels for underachieving students. Deadline: Nov. 14, 2008. For info, visit: <http://www.nctm.org/resources/content.aspx?id=1322>.

Library Awards

The Alibris Collection Award was designed to support libraries by providing materials for replacement projects, retrospective development projects, or routine collection building needs.

The award is \$3,000 worth of books to further the goals of a specific library. Each applicant must create an online "wishlist" for its desired books. Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008.

For info, visit: http://www.alibris.com/librarians/collection_award.cfm.

Science Honors

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) with sponsorship from Dow Chemical, is taking nominations for the prestigious Robert H. Carleton Award. This \$5,000 award honors an exemplary educator who is a long-time NSTA member and has made significant contributions to science education at the national level. Deadline: Nov. 30, 2008. For info, visit <http://www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx#carleton>.

Environment Awards

Each year the Sea World/Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Awards recognize groups that complete grassroots projects aimed at protecting and preserving the environment. School groups and one exceptional environmental educator that perform such projects are eligible for up to \$10,000 for the Environmental Excellence Awards. Deadline: Nov. 28, 2008. For info, visit <http://seaworld.org/conservation-matters/eea/index.htm>.

Library Programming Honored

The American Library Association is accepting applications for the Marshall Cavendish Excellence in Library Programming Award. This \$2,000 award recognizes school libraries that demonstrate high quality library programming with a positive impact on the community. Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008. For more info, visit: <http://www.ala.org/awardsbucket/cavendishaward>.



The Educators to Saudi Arabia delegation (Western High School media specialist William Bowles at right) listen to a hospital official at the International Medical Center in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The educators learned that medical care is free to Saudi citizens and this hospital is equipped with technology on par with the most modern hospitals in the world.

Saudi Arabia:

View from a Detroit Teacher

By William Bowles & Rick Joseph

Terrorist haven? Seat of Islamofascism? Oppressor of women?

These questions gripped our minds as we prepared for a 10-day trip to Saudi Arabia as a diverse delegation of 25 U.S. educators last November.

We were hosted by Saudi Aramco, the state-owned oil company that wanted to help rebuild U.S.-Saudi relations in the wake of 9/11. All Saudi Aramco asked was that we tell the story of our trip when we returned to the states.

What we found surprised and amazed us in ways we could not have imagined without actually visiting the country. Stereotypes of veiled women at the beck and call of their men were replaced by the reality of a broad spectrum of female independence.

Although women are officially prohibited from driving, rural women do drive cars – their survival depends on it. Although Saudi women make up only 10 percent of the workforce, more Saudi women attend college in Saudi Arabia than men.

Many female teenagers expressed pride in wearing a head scarf while extolling the virtues of the college education they would soon receive in the universities of Western countries. In the small but growing women's movement in Saudi Arabia, women are resisting the paternalistic system in which they find themselves. Their gains are incremental but we learned to appreciate the struggles that women have always faced in a male-dominated world, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Instead of Islamic extremism, which of course exists in Saudi Arabia, we were

surprised at the measure of openness offered to us as Christians and Jews, fellow “people of the book.” People we met clearly drew a distinction between us as people and the policies of our government, and we felt no judgment.

We were astounded at the power of oil wealth to transform a largely desolate nomadic region of warring tribes into one of the world's most modern and influential countries in about 70 years. From the oil-rich Eastern Province to cosmopolitan Jeddah, and Riyadh, the capital, the effects of globalization were everywhere: the ubiquitous presence of American fast-food chains and the popularity of modern malls that rival the Somerset Collection. The juxtaposition of veil-clad women ordering iced-mocha lattes at Starbucks appeared strange, but seemed to represent a Saudi hunger for American pop culture that is echoed in countless countries around the world.

As we make presentations about our trip, we look forward to engaging our students, parents and the larger community in the core lesson we learned as a result of our journey: the importance of balanced, honest inquiry. We realize the importance of avoiding stereotypes and impulsive judgments which seem rife in the frenzy of the mass media we consume each day. Searching for balance across the political spectrum serves as a valuable learning tool for our students in any context and a reminder to weigh our criticisms carefully.

William Bowles is a media specialist at Western High School. Rick Joseph teaches language arts and social studies in suburban Detroit.

Boys Search for Sexual Identity

By Ron Seigel

Without anyone intending it, our society is programming our boys into anti-social attitudes and pushing them into actions that are destructive and self-destructive. Often boys are brainwashed into associating aggressiveness with masculinity and identifying aggressiveness with their sexual identity.

Psychologist Jean Baker Miller wrote, “Boys are made to fear NOT being aggressive.”

This happens much the same way the Russian psychologist, Pavlov, programmed dogs to fear ringing bells. Pavlov systematically rang a bell before giving the dogs electric shocks. The dogs identified the ringing with such shocks and became terrified whenever they heard it.

Often when boys show traits that are labeled feminine (including failure to behave aggressively) their classmates, parents and even some teachers administer tormenting doses of verbal abuse, creating a sense of shame and essentially self-hatred.

Aggressiveness represents the capacity to hurt others (either emotionally or physically). This can lead to violence. Since the days of Tom Sawyer many boys have taken for granted that “real boys” must fight. In the last few decades teenagers have frequently tried to “prove” their manhood by killing.

Such attitudes often lead males into violence against themselves. They take dangerous chances and get involved in such suicidal activities as taking drugs, driving too fast or driving while drunk, because they are terrified of being considered feminine.

Males also do violence to their own emotions. Psychologist William Pollack of the Harvard University Medical School said under what he calls the “Boy Code,” they are often made to feel that emotions are feminine and tend to suppress all emotions except anger. They come to hate their own capacity to love. As a result, this “Boy Code” not only stimulates violence, but weakens the inner restraints against it.

Pollack suggests adults can free these kids from this emotional “strait jacket” by giving them opportunity to unwind, let loose and be their real selves.

Certainly teachers can explain this male brain-washing process and how it works and show (particularly in classes like literature, history and social studies) there are other definitions of masculinity and ways to be a man which combine strength and gentleness.

This can be done with gentle humor. Pollack noted that instead of saying things like, “Stop being so macho,” adults can say, “It must be hard to live up to the Boy Code.”

Ron Seigel is a freelance writer who lives in Highland Park.

Librarian Looks Far Beyond Detroit

Bill Bowles wants his students to see girls wearing head scarves. And he wants to talk about it.

Is it sexist? Is it freeing?

Bowles, a media specialist at Western International High School, has been navigating the globe for years, opening his eyes and brain to customs in other countries. He's worked in Nicaragua, studied in France, taught in Turkey, and helped build schools in Africa through a program called Building with Books.

A year ago, he was in a delegation of 25 educators visiting Saudi Arabia through the International Institute for Educators. The invitation was an effort to rebuild Saudi-U.S. ties after 9/11.

“It's all about open-mindedness,” Bowles said the teachers were encouraged to ask questions about everything they saw on their tour of Dahrhan, Jeddah and Riyadh.

Bowles has given several presentations to student groups on Saudi customs. Mostly, he wants to open dialogue with the students.

“I've been very fortunate to bring the cultures of the world to students through the generosity of these grants and programs,” he says.

Bowles efforts helped a student travel to Nicaragua last year to help build a school. Another student studied in France.

“I tell them when I was in high school I was not an outstanding student. If I can do it, you can do it.”

Art Teacher Wants the Focus on the Kids

Three times a day, art teacher Ann Marie Egigian got the troubled kid.

"How does he have me three times a day?" she thought. Who has this kind of luck?

"Little by little we got to know each other," she said. He started writing poems. She discovered a "poetry through the arts" program at the Detroit Institute of Arts. He got invited to a reading. His mother and grandmother were there.

Most important: He got applause.

This is one of teaching's breakthroughs.

"Those are the kids who should be showcased," says Egigian, a 12-year art teacher, now at Neinas Elementary School. She thinks we have to look from the ground up, not the top down.

"We have to look at the children. They have a lot to offer."

Egigian's dream is to start showcasing Detroit children on a television show.

"Everything is pessimistic mode right now and rightly so. But we need something uplifting." Egigian thinks art is the avenue.

She found many high school students repelling art.

"The kids weren't accepting it like I thought they would. They didn't need it. They didn't want it." But by mid year, Egigian said they were picking up materials and getting the point of art.

"At the end of the year, I felt like I really did my job."

Egigian, a graduate of the College for Creative Studies and four-time entry in "Who's Who in American Teachers," wants students to be exposed to art earlier in life.

Neinas — with a predominately Latino student population — was a smooth transition for Egigian who

understands how one's ethnicity and cultural influence can motivate self-expression, especially artistic expression. She says people deeply rooted in cultural experiences express themselves differently than those far removed from such contacts.

"It's all about positive experiences

during those early impressionable years that become the driving force to learn. You have to excite the senses of individual learners before methods in teaching can be effectively implemented."



Ann Marie Egigian is teaching her students to sew. "Boys love to sew. I think that it calms them."

Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. Dates and times are subject to change. The DFT telephone number is 313-875-3500.

OCTOBER

- 9** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 16** Open Forum — Call to Action Crisis Team, 5-8 p.m. Murray Wright High School
- 21** Retirees Chapter, 11:30 a.m.
- 27** Special Ed Chapter, 4:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 6** Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 13** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 17** Social Workers Chapter, 3:45 p.m.
- 18** Retirees Chapter, 11:30 a.m.
- 24** Special Ed Chapter, 4:30 p.m.

Ann Marie Egigian's Wish List

1. Start a children's show to showcase student talent and interests.
2. Students (especially boys) would not repel the arts until they have a hands-on sensory experience with them.
3. All youngsters would have a positive learning experience no matter what their environment might be.