

Just Do "IT"

By Stacy Olson, Instructional Technologist

Instructional technology, and technology in general, is changing constantly. The up-side: The large number of tools and resources out there ensures that every teacher can find something to grab onto and incorporate in their classroom. The following are some great free tools to get you started or add to your instructional technology toolkit. Enjoy and remember: Just Do "IT"!



Stacy Olson

Collaborize Classroom - <http://www.collaborizeclassroom.com/>. A great online forum created with teachers in mind. Through a single login, teachers can create multiple classes, create and monitor discussions, and send individualized feedback to students. Teachers can



choose what students have access to and there is a valuable language filter to eliminate the use of "colorful" language in responses. Teachers can also access individual student participation

reports for assessment/grading purposes. Students do not need email addresses to register and access the discussion.

Today'sMeet - <http://todaysmeet.com/>. This site is a "backchannel", which is a chat room that runs along with a class lesson/presentation. Students can use the online chat room to ask the teacher questions that the teacher can then address during the presentation or follow up with students afterwards, and is another way to get reluctant or shy students to participate in class.

YouTube Edu - <http://www.youtube.com/education>. YouTube just came out with an education channel to break the barrier that many schools have with using YouTube because of the concern of students accessing questionable content. The videos featured have been evaluated for educational content. Teachers can create playlists or a library of videos for students to access. The videos have also been categorized by subject/content area to make it easier for teachers to find exactly what they are looking for. One negative is that teachers must have a Gmail account to sign up for the service.

Kidblog.org - <http://kidblog.org/home.php>. Kidblog can be used with elementary and middle schools students and is one of the best blogging platforms for classrooms. Teachers can set up multiple classes and create student logins, so students don't need email addresses. Teachers can have a blog to facilitate class discussions, but each individual student has their own blog as well which can be used for journaling, writing assignments, and formative assessments. Teachers have control over what students see and have the option to approve/delete responses.

Originally hired as an RtI Specialist, I am now working on technology integration with Marshall, Worthington, and Lakeview School Districts. I assist teachers with planning lessons and technology-related activities or projects, train teachers to use technology and electronic software effectively, help with curriculum and content development that utilizes educational technology resources, aid with classroom management of technology resources, create training aids, and participate in the selection of appropriate technology tools to enhance classroom instruction. Feel free to contact me at stacy.olson@swsc.org.

KIDBLOG.org

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News from the Executive Director

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

WOW - what a winter, or maybe a better way to put it, "Non-Winter"! The lack of snow (and the lack of SNOW DAYS) has created a nice respite from our traditional Minnesota weather patterns. I have to admit though, in a year when I decided to get back into serious ice fishing, this year has been a real challenge and disappointment! Not because the fishing has been bad, but because, so far, the ice has been dangerous at best...

The other advantage to less snow (and cold) is the impact this can have on our winter budgets! After the tremendous amount of snow we have had the last couple of years, a "less-than-normal" accumulation of snow can only help our already strained budgets. It is nice to plan for snow removal expenses and then experience less than expected costs. This is also the time of year the Service Cooperative begins planning for next year!

Budgets and fees....a time consuming process that includes a significant amount of staff time to analyze and consider the factors that go into determining our revenues and expenditures. One of our primary goals is to manage our costs so we can minimize any increases in fees for the coming year! Over the past 3-4 years, we have been able to do a pretty good job of managing our budgets with minimal fee increases. It is our intention to continue to do this as we plan our budgets and fees for fiscal year 2012.

We will once again be engaged in the political process in St. Paul, as well as, Washington, D.C. during the coming months. With an important election looming in the fall of 2012, this is a good time to become more engaged in advocacy efforts. With support from various organizations and associations, you have an opportunity to be informed and to make a difference. I would encourage you to participate as much as you can in the political process!

We are here to serve our members and I hope in 2012 you will continue to challenge us, as well as expect us to work toward the achievement of our mission and vision.



Cliff Carmody

Withdraw Deadline

Quick reminder: If you plan to withdraw from any educational program (i.e. Occupational Therapy, Early Childhood Special Education, etc.) provided by SW/WC Service Cooperative, Statute 123A.33 creates employment rights for the following Service Cooperative employees:

- All licensed employees of the Service Cooperative referred to as "teachers" (i.e. School Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, etc.)

The statute requires that the Service Cooperative gives all teachers employed by the Service Cooperative written notice of the withdrawal by March 10th. Therefore, if you plan to withdraw from any educational program, please notify us in writing by March 1, 2012.

Division of Risk Management Services

By Doug Deragisch, Senior Director of Risk Management Services

School Pool Insurance Annual Meeting Set

The Annual Meeting of the School Insurance Pool has been set for Tuesday, April 3. The meeting will start at 9:30am and will be held at the Redwood Area Community Center. More information will be sent to group leaders as we get closer to April 3.

As of now the Pool's utilization is running higher than the past two renewals. With 'Rate Caps' in place for the 2012 renewal and the higher utilization, we may be looking at the 'Rate Cap'. However, one way to soften your cap is to look at and change your plan design to higher deductibles. For example, if you offer the #830 VEBA (\$1200/\$2400 deductible), by replacing it with the #831 VEBA (\$1850/\$3700 deductible) you can reduce your rates by approximately 5 - 7% (intended for illustration purposes only). If you would like to look at possible plan design changes, please contact Doug Deragisch at doug.deragisch@swsc.org (507-537-2295) or your BCBS Account Manager.



Wellness Institute

By Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator

In the Spring of 2012, the SW/WC Service Cooperative will be offering a Wellness Incentive Pilot Program to districts that expressed interest at an informational meeting that was held on January 17, 2012. The Wellness Institute Pilot Program is intended to reward covered employees for participation in healthy activities.

During a two week eligibility period, covered employees will be invited to complete a confidential health assessment questionnaire. The questionnaire has been specifically designed to help employees assess their health. Is the employee getting enough physical activity? Does the employee eat enough fruits and vegetables? How's their cholesterol? Fifteen minutes is all it takes. The employee will immediately receive a personal results page full of ideas for a healthier lifestyle.



Kari Bailey

If an employee elects to complete the Health Assessment during the eligibility period, the employee will receive a \$200 incentive which the employer will apply to the 2012/2013 medical premium or deposit it in the employee's medical savings account (HSA, VEBA).

The health assessment profile is individualized. No one will have access to individual results but the employee. The employer may have access to non-personalized combined results based on all employees' responses to the profile in hopes to use the results to consider what health resources will be most useful for their employees in the years to come.

If you have questions about the Wellness Institute Pilot Program, please contact Kari Bailey at 507-537-2292 or kari.bailey@swsc.org.

Health Cost Management Program

By Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator

We're half-way through the school year meaning the 2011-2012 Health Cost Management Program (HCMP) is well underway. In addition to program activities, districts are offering a wide range of biometric screenings including cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, body composition, BMI, vision, hearing, thyroid, PSA, vitamin D, cardiovascular, stress, and hemoglobin. If you have questions about the HCMP, please contact Kari Bailey at 507-537-2292 or kari.bailey@swsc.org.

Reimbursements for program activities and screenings are due Friday, May 4th. Please submit all reimbursement requests to Kari on/before May 4th.



Division of Special Education Services

By Diane McCarron, Director of Special Education Services

A colleague recently shared an article about practicing an attitude of gratitude. The article inspired me to read more, and I learned that practicing gratitude has been linked to better physical and psychological health, better life satisfaction, increased energy levels, and increased social connections. Practicing gratitude lowers incidence of aggression, alcoholism, depression, envy and greed. Psychologist Philip Watkins has found that clinically depressed people exhibit 50% less gratitude than people who aren't depressed. The University of Connecticut researchers found that gratitude lowered the risk of heart attack victims from suffering a second attack. Psychologist Jeffrey Froh found that grateful students report higher levels of grades, life satisfaction and social integration and less depression and envy. Less grateful 14-19 year olds were unhappier and more materialistic.

Attorney John Kralik, faced with a challenging time in life, decided to write a thank-you note a day for a year, and wrote about the transformation it inspired within him in the book 365 Thank Yous. I'm not sure I'm ready to make that kind of commitment, but I am going to make a personal attempt to show more gratitude this year.

A quick survey of a few of the SW/WC SC special education staff revealed the following things for which they are grateful:

- The SW/WC SC was able to fill summer vacancies with knowledgeable and qualified staff
- The keynote speaker at the Fall Extravaganza was inspirational for the special education staff from the local districts and SW/WC SC
- The MDE Due Process monitoring of special education files is nearing completion
- The MDE Fiscal monitoring of special education spending is nearing completion
- The Worthington school district joined us for special education services
- Travel on the roads has been worry free
- SW/WC SC Staff are able to collaborate with other members of the SC at the joint staff meetings
- The addition of the new behavior analysis has been very helpful for school districts
- New SEAT Teams have had a successful beginning in a number of school districts
- SPED secretaries from across our agency have had

the opportunity to network

- Four area schools received an AT Team Project Grant (Worthington, WWG, Lakeview and LQPV).

Jill Rohman and Bonnie Rauk presented at a national conference (D/HH)

- We have two coordinators for early childhood who are very knowledgeable and helpful to our districts.
- We had forms, policies, oversight committees, etc. ready for the new Restrictive Procedures Law
- We are producing Online Professional Development trainings
- We have new testing materials which have allowed us to provide up-to-date professional assessments
- We had a collaborative project at the end of November with PACER to bring information on behavior management to parents and teachers. We have an additional workshop scheduled in March, working with PACER to bring information to parents about transition options.
- Some staff were awarded grant money for an iPad, and the students love using them to work on their goals
- I'm thankful for all the wonderful children I get to work with each day, as there is never a boring day!

Although we are born with specific temperamental tendencies, the brain is a muscle, and you can strengthen your mind's natural tendency toward optimism if you work at it. Fortunately the attitude of gratitude can be cultivated, with a little practice. I'm ready to get in better shape. Join me?



Diane McCarron

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Q&A with Ryan Groeneweg

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

Starting in the Fall of 2011, the SW/WC Service Cooperative hired a Behavior Analyst to better serve our member school districts. Not sure what a Behavior Analyst does? Take a few minutes to read this Q&A with our new Behavior Analyst, Ryan Groeneweg!



Ryan Groeneweg

What is your background? I attended the University of South Dakota and obtained my Specialist degree (Ed.S) as a school psychologist. After working as a school psychologist for the Freemont, NE and Pipestone School Districts, I took a job at Children's Care in Sioux Falls. During my 5 year employment with CCHS, I provided school psychology services, but began to consult in school districts in IA, NE, SD, and MN to assist with challenging behaviors exhibited by children with Autism and related developmental disabilities. This eventually led to a decision to obtain certification as a behavior analyst, which I completed through the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT).

What is a behavior analyst? Briefly, professionals in applied behavior analysis engage in the specific and comprehensive use of principles of learning, including operant and respondent learning, in order to address behavioral needs of widely varying individuals in diverse settings. Examples of these applications include: building the skills and achievements of children in school settings; enhancing the development, abilities, and choices of children and adults with different kinds of disabilities; and augmenting the performance and satisfaction of employees in organizations and businesses.

What do you do with the students you see? What ages do you work with? I work with all school age children, with the most frequent referrals comprised of Pre-K to Middle School ages. I arrive at districts and typically am there for part of the day to a whole day, depending on the schools needs. I conduct direct observations of student behaviors, review programs, and ultimately provide feedback and directions to team members. My role as consultant is somewhat limited by constraints of time spent in districts. However, a significant strength for my role as a consultant is the substantial experience in working successfully with educational teams and in assisting with developing positive change in the behaviors of children they serve.

What support/training do you provide to district teams? Conducting workshops and training opportunities is another significant service I can offer districts who access my services. I have done many workshops and presentations on topics addressing principles of applied behavior analysis and using those strategies to effect positive behavior change in classrooms, to specific topics such as autism spectrum disorders, discrete trial teaching concepts, and even effective playground supervision strategies.

Are there any student need requirements before a district can purchase your services? My position is currently limited to working with children who are on IEP's. There are no other restrictions in terms of student needs, other than it is far better to access and use my services well in advance of a child's behaviors reaching a critical level!

If your district is interested in purchasing some of Ryan's time for the 2012-13 school year, please contact your Director of Special Education.

To learn more about behavior analysts, visit the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's website at www.bacb.com

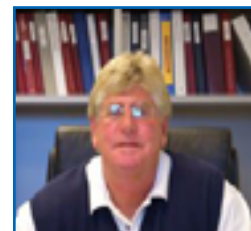


Division of Teaching & Learning Services

By Bob Braun, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services

Cohort 8 PBIS Applications

Applications for Cohort 8 School Wide-Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (SW-PBIS) initiative for the 2011-2012 school year are now available on the MDE website. (www.pbismn.org) In 2008 4 schools in the southern region were involved in the School Wide-Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (SW-PBIS) initiative.



Bob Braun

In 2009 the SW/WC SC in conjunction with the South Central Service Cooperative and Southeast Service Cooperative applied for a grant through the MDE to expand the number of schools in the southern part of Minnesota using SW-PBIS a systems approach in achieving three primary expectations: Academic Skill Competence, Social Skill Competence and Lifestyle Skills Competence. In May of 2009 the proposal was approved and the Southern Regional SW-PBIS Implementation Project was initiated.

In the last three years Cohort 5, 6, and 7 have been established. We currently have 44 schools in the Southern region in various stages of training and implementation of SW-PBIS. It is anticipated that an additional 15-20 new schools (Cohort 8) will begin implementation in 2011-2012.

Schools currently involved in the implementation of PBIS in Regions 6 & 8 are:

Cohort 5

- Glencoe/Silver Lake Elementary
- Lake Benton Elementary

Cohort 6

- KMS Elementary
- Windom High School
- Marshall Middle School
- Murray County Central Elementary
- RTR Elementary

Cohort 7

- Lester Prairie Public School
- Edgerton Public Schools
- Marshall High School
- Murray County Central Middle and High School
- Redwood Falls - Reede Grey Elementary
- Yellow Medicine East - Bert Raney Elementary
- KMS High School

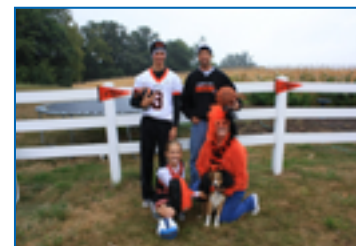
The premise behind SW-PBIS is to shift from a reactive and aversive approach to managing problem behavior to one that is preventive and positive. SW-PBIS is comprised of a broad range of systems and individual strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors with all students. For additional information on the Southern Regional SW-PBIS Implementation Project contact Bob Braun, at 507-537-2252 or bob.braun@swsc.org.

Sleepy Eye Schools Introduce PBIS

By Shane Laffen, Sleepy Eye High School Principal and Sleepy Eye Pride committee member

What is PBIS? PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. It is an initiative the Minnesota Department of Education has been supporting by providing training to interested school districts. We are currently in our second year of training and our first year of implementation. We call our program Sleepy Eye Pride. The three staples of our program are Respect Everyone, Respond Safely Every Time, and Responsible Everywhere. This program focuses on teaching students appropriate behaviors and interpersonal skills.

We developed several desired behavior and interpersonal skill matrixes. Teachers taught students the desired behaviors and interpersonal skills at the beginning of the school year. Staff has been recognizing students who exhibit these desired behaviors and skills by awarding them with a Pride Counts tickets. Our system of recognition involves students who earn pride counts tickets to enter them into daily drawings. Students who have their pride counts ticket drawn are then able to select various incentives for demonstrating Sleepy Eye Pride. (Continued on Page 7)



900 Participants Attend Conference for Young Artists

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Nearly 900 participants from 30 school districts attended SW/WC Service Cooperative's 18th Annual Conference for Young Artists on November 2, 2011 at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall. In addition, many parents registered their children on their own.

The keynote was presented by Shaun Hays, a national and international speaker from the Chicago area. Hays used his multiple talents to inspire, educate and entertain his audience. His speed chalk art "wowed" his audience with high intensity, color and emotion.

Students also attended three hands-on sessions on various topics related primarily to the visual and performing arts: pottery, clay sculpture, drawing, printmaking, origami, collage, decoupage, acting classes, choreography, learning about digital media, dance from throughout the world, creating cartoon characters, sand painting, and much more.

If you have questions, email sue.gorecki@swsc.org or call 507-537-2258.

Congratulations to Murray County Central Schools for submitting the winning bid for the mural created by Shawn Hays! THANKS MCC for your support of student activities at SW/WC SC!



Mark your calendars for the next student conference!

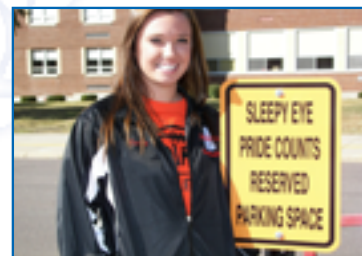
Science and Nature Conference

May 11th at Southwest Minnesota State University

(Sleepy Eye PBIS, continued from page 6)

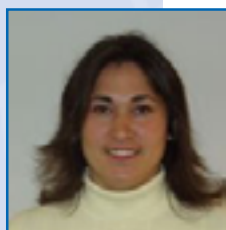
We have promoted our program with our students and parents by holding special events. Before school started we had a PBIS kickoff. The kickoff included a PowerPoint presentation outlining the specifics of the program. The presentation was interactive and door prizes were awarded. We also served free tacos in a bag following the presentation for all in attendance. During our Homecoming week we held a Sleepy Eye Pride contest. Families sent in pictures of themselves showing their Sleepy Eye Pride. Those demonstrating the most Sleepy Eye Pride were recognized and earned concession stand vouchers. Leading up to our first round of parent-teacher conferences we had families fill in Sleepy Eye Pride Bingo Cards. Families that turned in completed cards were entered into a drawing for concession stand vouchers. We are planning a Sleepy Eye Pride Week toward the end of our second trimester that will include special spirit days and a reward and recognition time for all students who had one or fewer office referrals for the trimester.

We have been told by our trainers that their programs are still a work in progress. So, while our program is put together for this school year, we understand that it is still a work in progress and we will continue to explore ways to improve it further. In the meantime, we are finding satisfaction because we feel our students have responded well to our program. We feel our students have a clearer understanding of acceptable behavior and our building climate has improved.

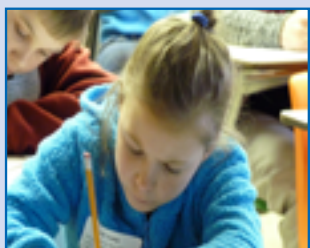




Scan this QR Code to
read more about ALL of
our Student Activities



Andrea Anderson



Local Spelling Bees Held

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Many local schools are busy with local Spelling Bees at various levels: classroom, grade level, school, district, etc. Students in grades 5-8 are eligible to participate in this program. Schools participating in Spelling Bee this year include: ACGC, Benson, Canby, Central Minnesota Christian, ECHO, Fulda, Holy Redeemer, KMS, Lake Benton, Lakeview, Lester Prairie, Lincoln HI, Lac qui Parle Valley, MACCRAY, Marshall, Minneota, Murray County Central, Ortonville, Redwood Area, Renville County West, Samuel Lutheran, Wabasso and Yellow Medicine East.

Winning students at the local level will compete in the Regional Spelling Bee on February 14 (snow date - February 15) at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. This event features the region's preeminent spellers as they respond to the pressure of competition by using their incredible spelling acumen and memory to dissect and spell some arduous words. The event motivates students to expand their vocabulary, spelling skills and their appreciation of the English language. The top four students at the Regional event will advance to the Multi-Region State Event on March 1 in Fergus Falls with the winning student participating in the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. If you have questions, email sue.gorecki@swsc.org or call 507-537-2258.



Sue Gorecki

Finding Some Inspiration

By Jenny Kirk, Marshall Independent (Reprinted With Permission from The Independent)

One never knows what will happen when you give an imaginative student a blank piece of paper, though many of those students who attended the 20th annual Conference for Young Writers Thursday at SMSU were on their way to constructing unique and entertaining creations.

For two decades, the SW/WC SC has sponsored the writing conference, but this year marked the largest attendance of all. "We had just under a thousand attending," event organizer Andrea Anderson (pictured at left) said. "We had 30 school districts represented." Anderson, who is a student activities assistant at the Service Cooperative, has helped organize the event for the past eight years, but had to jump some additional hurdles this year. "The biggest challenge was making sure the kids are getting as many of the sessions they signed up for as possible," Anderson said. "With 220 students over our total last year, we had to do some scrambling to get additional presenters. But it worked out. We've got some really good ones." Each student was allowed to attend three of 24 total sessions, which included a variety of genres.

"I like 'It's in the Bag' presented by Deb Mercier," Lakeview student Erin Stevens said. "It's good. It's probably the best one so far."

Other area students, including Tracy Area Public School's Spencer Gravely and Emily Munson, Marshall Public School's Rae Critchley and Marshall Area Christian School's Olivia Knochenmus and Johanna Christensen, were also in the same session with Stevens, and appeared to enjoy the stringing-along story they all helped to create as Mercier asked them to come up one at a time, pull out a random object from inside a colorful bag and add onto the story using the new item.

"I really liked that it teaches us to be creative," Stevens said. "I like writing. I like realistic fiction the best."

(continued on page 10)

Residencies Planned During April

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Through the Children's Author & Illustrator Program students in local elementary classrooms meet professional authors and illustrators who share their personal adventures of creating and publishing books. Energized students learn that having a book published is more than just a dream. This year's residencies will be held April 10-13 and April 23-27, 2012. Participating districts include: BBE, BOLD, Cedar Mountain, Comfrey,



Edgerton, Holy Redeemer, Hutchinson, KMS, Lac qui Parle Valley, Lincoln HI, MACCRAY, Marshall, Milroy, Minneota, Pipestone Area, Redwood Area, Wabasso Public Library (hosting St. Anne's & Public School), Westbrook-Walnut Grove, and Yellow Medicine East. In addition, two libraries are hosting evening events - Meinders Community Library in Pipestone and Nobles County Library in Worthington. This year's presenters are listed below:

Ryan Jacobson, Author: Ryan uses his love of books and his talent for storytelling to get students excited about reading and writing. He has written 12 wonderful, imaginative adventures—including Nature Squad, Santa Claus: Super Spy and Lost in the Wild—for readers from kindergarten to sixth grade. Ryan is an avid reader and writer, and he enjoys sharing these passions with others.

Jill Kalz, Author: Jill received her BA and MFA, both in creative writing, from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and is currently putting them to good use as a senior editor at Picture Window Books, an educational children's book publisher. Jill has written nearly 50 books for children including Farmer Cap, Henry Shortbull Swallows the Sun, Galen's Camera and several books about Tuckerbean.

Sheryl Peterson, Author: In her non-fiction books Sheryl works to tell a story that will grab a middle-grade kid's imagination, not just report a series of stuffy facts. She is the author of many non-fiction books, including Sugar, Egyptian Pyramids, Machu Picchu, The Empire State Building, The Florida Marlins and The Seattle Mariners. Her newest books (Stegosaurus, Pterodactyl and Velociraptor) have taken her millions of years back in time to the age of the dinosaurs.

If you have questions about this program or want to make sure your school gets information on the Children's Author & Illustrator Program for next year, email sue.gorecki@swsc.org or call 507-537-2258.

SHKB Registrations Due

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Reminder! Registration deadlines are approaching for participation in the Senior High Knowledge Bowl Program. The Early Bird Registration Deadline is January 30 with the Final Deadline on February 6. The registration form is available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities.

Sr. High Knowledge Bowl is an interdisciplinary academic program. Team members work cooperatively to solve oral and written questions. Intense competition often results as teams race against each other to be the first to "buzz in" and answer the question correctly. Schools practice at the local level and participate in invitationals hosted by area districts prior to participation in Sub-Regional and Regional events hosted by the SW/WC Service Cooperative. Top teams from Region 6 and 8 advance to the State competition in April. Questions? Contact Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or phone at 507-537-2258.



Ryan Jacobson



Jill Kalz



Sheryl Peterson



Junior High Knowledge Bowl Events Held

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Teams from area schools participated in invitationals hosted by local districts to practice their skills in preparation for Sub-Region and Regional Knowledge Bowl events hosted by the SW/WC Service Cooperative. A total of 90 teams from 36 districts registered in the Junior High

Knowledge Bowl program and participated in the Sub-Regional

events. The Region 6 event, held on December 16, consisted of 36 teams from 17 districts. The top three teams were Glencoe-Silver Lake #1, Hutchinson #1, and Glencoe-Silver Lake #2. The Region 8 event, held on December 19, consisted of 54 teams from 19 districts.

The top three teams were Murray County Central #1, Mountain Lake #1, and Marshall #1. All students received participation ribbons. Winning teams received a school trophy and individual ribbons.



GSL #1

Eighteen teams from Region 6 and twenty-seven teams from

Region 8 advanced to the Regional event on January 3. After in-

tense competition, the following teams won: **1st - Glencoe-Silver Lake #1 (left)** - 136 points, **2nd - Murray County Central #1 (top right)** - 110.5 points, and **3rd - Hutchinson #1 (right)** - 104.5 points. Winning teams received a picture plaque and students received medals with neck ribbons. Congratulations to the winning students and schools!

If you have questions concerning Junior High Knowledge Bowl, please check out our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities or email sue.gorecki@swsc.org or call 507-537-2258.



MCC #1



Hutch #1

(Finding Some Inspiration, continued from page 8)

Presenter Rebecca Fjelland Davis, who was also the keynote speaker this year, had her students watch a two-minute trailer for one of her newest books - "Chasing AllieCat" - before asking a series of questions involving characters, problems and twists. Then the students selected random slips of paper - one each from four buckets - and used the ideas to begin their own story on a blank sheet of paper.

"Some people have commented that they've just been having a blast in the sessions," Anderson said. "So that's awesome."

Across the hall, students acted out "sky surfing" techniques on chairs while in presenter Patrick Ryan's "Extreme Sports" session. Student judges then awarded scores for the acting efforts.

Fourth-grader Macy Posthuma, who attends Murray County Central, was returning to the conference for her second straight year. "I really liked it," she said. "I wanted to come back." Posthuma said she thoroughly enjoyed "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs" presented by Melanie Schmidt and "In Praise of a...Pineapple?" presented by Laura Purdie Salas. "The best part was doing the poetry and the scripts," Posthuma said. "I liked all of my sessions. I'd give them a 10 on a scale of 1-10." In the acting session, Posthuma was chosen to perform in "The Magic Carpet Ride." "Like we say in the theater, 'there are no small roles,'" Schmidt said. "You can steal the show with any role." In another session, Posthuma created an animal cartoon. "I made a regular snake, but it kind of had a gorilla head and a snake body," she said.

Minneota student Alex Saltzer, who said activating is his favorite creative activity, got the opportunity to portray "Jack" of the famed "Jack and Jill" during the "Hints and Tricks to Make Your Writing Come Alive" presented by Mike Blumer. In one scene, Blumer had an actor slam a book down to let everyone know she was angry. "It's showing versus telling," Blumer said. In another scene, Saltzer had to pretend to fall into the water and start choking before he managed to climb out of the pool and head over to find "Jill." "It was cool," Saltzer said. "The best part was when I got to act."

Canby students Skye Christian and Cami Baumann were excited for their third session, which was 14-year-old Ben Heckmann's "Rockin' Out with Writing and Illustrating." "I love playing

(Continued on Page 12)



Take Your Students on a Field Trip.... To the Science and Nature Conf

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

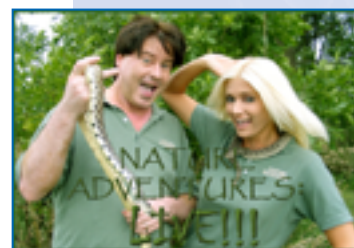
The 19th Annual Science & Nature Conference will be held on May 11, 2012 at SMSU in Marshall. We think this is one of the largest and most popular science conferences for students in the country! Over the past three years, enrollment has ranged from 1175 to 1332 participants and from 25 to 32 school districts. We're planning for an even larger crowd this year! Consider sending a class of students, or classes, to this event in place of an end of school year field trip. With 25 to 30 different topics, all students can find classes they're interested in attending.

Topics at past conferences have included geocaching, motion control, grossology, engineering, reptiles, constellations, DNA, wetlands, GPS technology, science magic, rockets, invention, cryogenics, animals, astronomy, electricity, archeology, solar energy, information on science-related careers and much more.

The keynote speakers will be Todd Magnuson and Terri Lawrenz, hosts of Nature Adventure on South Dakota Public Broadcasting TV (pictured at right).

Watch for the conference brochure in your mail in late February or on our website (www.swsc.org/studentactivities). Register by March 27 for the Early Bird fee; the Final Registration Deadline is April 3.

If you have questions, contact Sue at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258 or Andrea at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257.



Changes in Store for SW/WC SC's Educational Resource Library

By Lucy Tolkeim, Resource Library Coordinator

SW/WC SC's Educational Resource Library begun by Mary Weber in the 1970's is adjusting to the wave of digital information that is sweeping over us. We are weeding and streamlining the library collection as we design an alternate system that integrates new digital and hard copy resources.

I joined the SW/WC SC as the Resource Library Coordinator in October 2011 after Mary's retirement. Directing the Marshall Talents Academy's summer enrichment program deepened my interest in connecting teachers and students with high-interest, hands-on learning materials. I am excited to have joined this project of developing a place for teachers (located on the SW/WC SC website) stocked with resources that we know are quality and have gathered in one place for you, ready for use in your standards-focused classroom.

We are looking at best practice education services and digital libraries, as well as valuable online services that a school district might not be able to afford on its own. We know that ideas and commitment of educators will be important to us at every part of the process.

Please feel free to contact me at Lucy.Tokheim@swsc.org. It is part of the SW/WC SC's mission to save school districts time and money while building scaffolds to the alternate digital learning environment that is emerging.



Lucy Tokheim



The REACH Program

By Michael Scott, Hutchinson High School Assistant Principal

The REACH Program is a voluntary, in school program of the Hutchinson High School designed to assist our students who may need support academically, socially, and /or emotionally. The Goal: Help students experience success by learning new life skills to overcome barriers and/or challenges present in their lives.

Class groups (Teams) ideally consist of 10 to 15 students, with direct instruction from two instructors (Team Leaders), working closely with the team of Administration, Social Worker, Guidance Counselors, and Students' Families. The REACH Program not only supports these students academically, but helps the students to build skills necessary to become successful adults after graduation.

The REACH Philosophy: To REACH out and serve all students who need support, by helping them attain their place in life through academic and interpersonal success.

What does REACH stand for? Relationships: A safe place for students to belong, connect, and support each other. Education: Positive learning opportunities through academic support and individual assignment modification as needed. Accountability: A staff support network committed to helping students succeed with parental support. Character: Skill building activities that encourage positive academic and personal growth. Hard work: An atmosphere that encourages students rising to the level of expectations.

Community Investment: 2011 marked the second annual Spooky Sprint 5K and Kids Dash with all proceeds going to the REACH program. We were able to raise over \$4,500 for the REACH program with this event! This year we doubled our numbers, going from 187 entries last year to exactly 400 this year. Our kids volunteered for the event and made a great impact in the community. The REACH Program was extremely pleased to be a part of this great community building event in Hutchinson!

[\(Finding Some Inspiration, continued from page 10\)](#)

guitar and writing," Heckmann said. "When I was 11, I published my first book. And, I'm going to tell you how to get your own book published." Baumann had never been to the conference before, but was having fun. "I like to write," she said. "I did come to the Young Artists Conference though." Baumann's favorite session was the cartoon animals one. "I really like to draw," she said. "I drew a wolf, a really mad wolf."

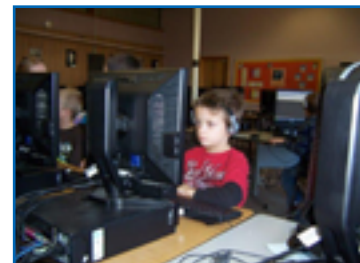
Christian's favorite was different than her schoolmate's. "My favorite was the scary, bone-rattling one," she said referring to presenter Terri DeGezelle's "Beware! Scary, Bone Rattling Stories Written Here!" session. "It was fun. I liked hearing the stories."

Amidst teaching the students about writing solid hook and clincher sentences at the beginning and end of columns, presenter Carole Achterhof let the kids go wild with story ideas in her "Get Paid to Make People Laugh!" session. Some creative ideas included "why Superman is a villain" and "why watching television is good for you." But the audience quickly decided that Marshall student Kevin Berg had the best idea. "How about 'why school is bad for you,'" Berg said. Berg said that one session really struck a chord with his interests. "I really enjoyed making a fantasy world," he said. "The hardest part is making sure to include details, so you have to think and focus. I like writing. I probably finish the story I started."

RTR Strives to Increase Student Achievement through 21st Century Skills

By Amy Christensen, RTR Elementary Principal

Teacher Mandy Press has her students using the web based program, Power Reading Online (PRO). From the 15 minutes her class spends using PRO each day, she has seen increases in both reading levels and sight word recognition. PRO is available K-12; RTR Elementary has received unlimited access to the program from the National Reading Styles Institute.



PRO is simple for both teachers and students to use. Students begin the program by taking a placement test which determines their individual reading levels. From there, students begin a two day cycle listening to high-interest stories and playing comprehension games. On day 1, a student will read along with the audio of the story at least twice and then play the online game. On day 2, a student will read along with the story at least once more, play the online game again, and then do a read-back with their teacher. During the read-back, the teacher listens to the student read the story. While listening, the teacher keeps track of reading errors and listens for appropriate expression. The student gives a summary of the story as well. Results are logged into the computer program. When teacher and student have finished the read-back, the student returns to the computer to answer comprehension questions. The entire read-back process takes no more than 2-3 minutes. Students typically make it through 2 stories a week, which allows time for them to get the repetition needed to retain and identify sight words.



Tracking student progress on PRO is effortless. There are five individual reports available, including story choices (upper grades are given the choice of story topics), individual total report, reading skills report, progress report, and the student assessment report. There are also group reports to help determine areas that need to be addressed with the whole group or in small groups. This program is wonderful for differentiating to meet the needs of every student in the classroom.

PRO is easy to use and even younger students quickly learn how to navigate the program. The repetition of reading along with stories at students' individual reading levels provides the ideal learning opportunity for each student in the classroom. Best of all, students look forward to using the program each day and are showing gains in their reading abilities.

Worthington Students Finalists in USS MN Logo Contest

By Gail Holinka, Worthington Public Schools

Worthington Public Schools is VERY proud to announce that two of our Graphic students were in the final Top 10 in the USS MN Logo Contest. More details: <http://ussminnesota.org/>.

Jonah Oberloh (right): 'The Fish of the Seas'. My piece of art includes both national and state symbols. The state fish and the American eagle are both symbols associated with our nation. I have lived in Minnesota my whole life and have developed a respect for my state and am proud that our state will be represented by such a great submarine.



Vicky Phannara (below): "Minnesota, My Home." I am 17 years old. I was born in California but my family and I moved to Worthington Minnesota when I was very young. I've been living in Worthington my whole life. This place may be little, but it has a lot to give. It gave me shelter, love, friends, family and hope. A very precious memory I have of this place, I call home, is of my father. Although my father isn't here with me now, I still have wonderful memories of us together when he was still living. I'm dedicating this logo to the Minnesota Navy because I am proud to be living here and I am proud of everyone risking their lives for us, the people of the USA. In this logo, I put the eagle above the submarine because it's a sign that God is watching over them. I've also added the flag and the sun light because veterans serve for the USA and after the years of serving, veterans can come home and live life freely under the beautiful sun.



Division of Administrative Services

Cooperative Purchasing Announces.... “Why I Love Office Max” Video Contest

By Shareen Neumann, Sales & Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing

Dust off your video camera, or enlist the help of some of your students! Cooperative Purchasing is holding a contest where you could win \$100 in Office Max Gift Cards for your school.

Just submit a short (no more than 3 minute) video showing why you love Office Max and you could be one of 2 winners of \$100 in OfficeMax Gift Cards. If your video wins, you must agree to let us post the video on our website.



The deadline to submit a video is January 31, 2012. Winners will be announced on February 8, 2012. Videos should be submitted to Shareen Neumann at Shareen.Neumann@swsc.org. If you have any questions, please contact Shareen Neumann (507)537-2279.



Shareen Neumann



Upcoming Conferences-Mark Your Calendars!

Two big conferences are coming up soon, so please mark your calendars!

Annual Technology Conference

Held at SMSU in Marshall

Pre-sessions--Thursday, March 8th

Conference--Friday, March 9th

Registration info will be out soon!

Annual School Business Staff Conference

Held at SMSU in Marshall

Tuesday, March 20th

Registration is now open! www.swsc.org/workshops



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Day of Excellence

Thanks to ALL who have supported the Day of Excellence Conference over the past 27 years. Due to declining attendance and the need for more specific professional development, the Day of Excellence will no longer be held. Please contact your special education director or coordinator for your professional development needs.....and visit our website often to check for updated professional development offerings.



Introducing the NEW Member Services Database

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

For the past year, we have been working on a new Member Services Database which would allow our member districts to look up information about the programs and services they purchase, including staff persons who work in/with their district. Have you ever found yourself forgetting who your finance person is through the RMIC? Did you forget the name of the school psych who is in your district twice a week? This database will help you!

To access the database, you must login to our website at www.swsc.org and click the "sign in" button in the top right corner. Enter the sign in name of member and the password of login. From there you go to the About Us section... and click on Members. On that screen, you will see "member services database" listed in the left column. Once you click into the database, you can search your school district and see all of the programs and services you purchase, along with contact person email and phone number. We hope you will find this database helpful as we are very excited about it. If you have questions or problems, please contact Shelly Maes at shelly.maes@swsc.org. We want this to be a valuable resource for you...so if you have suggestions let us know!



Nominate an Outstanding Educator!

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

This year, our region was home to three WEM Outstanding Educator winners—one statewide winner and two regional winners. Tom Appel, agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at Mountain Lake, won a 2011 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Academic Challenge Coach. Rick Purrington from Marshall and Patrick Hiltner from GSL won regional honoree awards.

The WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program was created in 1998 by the WEM Foundation in support of teachers and their important role in helping all students achieve academically, and seeks to bring recognition to the often "unsung heroes" who meet the challenges of teaching in a variety of settings. Synergy & Leadership Exchange, in partnership with members of The Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC), administers the award program on behalf of the WEM Foundation. Only licensed educators and administrators from Minnesota public or non-public schools, or educational institutions are eligible.

Honorees are selected in each category below and each receives an unrestricted \$10,000 gift and crystal apple award. In addition, regional honorees are named who receive an unrestricted \$1,000 gift, trophy and the opportunity to compete in the state competition the following year.

- Teacher Achievement Awards
- Academic Challenge Coach Awards
- Ethics in Education Awards

Visit the Synergy & Leadership Exchange website at <http://synergyexchange.org> for additional details. Let's make sure SW and WC Minnesota are represented among the winners for 2012!



*Shelly Maes with
last year's honoree,
Tom Appel*

**Nomination
Deadline:
February 6, 2012**

Upcoming Professional Development

To register for any of these workshops, visit our website at www.swsc.org and click on Workshops. Please check back often as workshops are frequently added. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Christensen at dawn.christensen@swsc.org or 507-537-2278.

Spring 2012

- 1/27 MSTP-Exploring the World Around Us - Workshop #3
- 1/30 Speech-Language Evaluations 101
- 2/1 Guided Reading
- 2/2 SMART Users' Networking Group Make It & Take It
- 2/6 SMARTBoard Level I
- 2/7 Principals Workshop #3 Increase Student Achievement
- 2/7 Rational Number Explorations-Fractions #3
- 2/10 Teaming with Paraprofessionals - Willmar
- 2/13 Is it ASD, EB/D, or OHD? - Redwood Falls
- 2/15 Annual School Law Seminar
- 2/23 SMARTBoard Level II
- 2/28 CPI Refresher
- 3/1 Superintendent Workshop
- 3/2 Teaming with Paraprofessionals-Lamberton
- 3/8-9 6th Annual Technology Conference
- 3/9 KTEA-II Training - Redwood Falls
- 3/14 Accessible Instructional Materials and Digital Books -Redwood Falls
- 3/20 29th Annual School Business Staff Conference
- 3/22 Routine Based Interview and Goals/Obj in ECSE - Redwood Falls
- 4/12 ECSE: Behavioral Strategies and Technology - Redwood Falls

** All workshops held in Marshall unless otherwise noted

Keep current on
workshops and meetings!
Scan this QR Code
to visit our website.



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Our Mission

*The SW/WC Service Cooperative
is a public agency dedicated
to meeting the needs of our
members by providing high
quality programs through
partnership, innovation,
leadership, and service.*

Our Priorities for 2011-2012

- We will continuously gather, analyze, and incorporate data into our decision making process regarding programs and services for our members.
- We will develop and maintain partnerships that enhance our mission and vision.
- We will engage our members by providing open, on-going, and timely communications.
- We will administer strong fiscal policies and procedures that support our mission and vision.
- We will embrace and utilize technologies that support our ability to provide high quality programs and services.
- We will develop and implement human resource policies and procedures that value and engage our workforce.