



June Newsletter, 2011

Happy Summer Members,

I hope you are busy renewing your spirit, gathering and sharing your thoughts and ideas, and collaborating with your colleagues. Sometimes it helps to have someone you can share ideas and encouragement with. A few pieces of information are provided for you here. The first is news and information that celebrates our colleagues. The second is information about the *Success in the Middle Act* that is going to be reintroduced to congress. The final is a reflection of the Milledgeville experience and where we are in planning our next steps.

## Part I: News

**The Middle Grades Research Journal is looking for a new editor in chief. Please see the attached call.**

**Deadlines:** We have just been notified that our Best Practice Session has been accepted for the NMSA conference. If you are interested in participating as a team and/or as an individual, consider submitting a proposal for the round table session. The following is the description of the session:

*Roundtable sessions are 75-minute sessions broken into (3) 20-25 minute rotations. Each presenter is assigned a table in a room where participants can sit with them for a more one-on-one type discussion of your topic. After 20-25 minutes, a bell will ring and participants will move to the next table of interest to them.* If you are interested in submitting a proposal, go to the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q8KLNB>. The Deadline is June 15, 2011. The planning committee will notify you by the 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Congratulations to Belinda and Christine!!**

Belinda Laumbach, New Mexico Highlands University, has just been named director of the Highlands University Center for Professional Development. This requires that I plan an institute for middle level teams of teachers with follow-up provided during the academic year. I am excited to implement some ideas I have for an innovative type of faculty development that requires working with the participating teams throughout the year.

Christine Royce, Shippensburg University has been recognized as the PA Association College of Teacher Educators (PACTE) Educator of the Year in 2010

### **Expanding Middle Level Education outside the universities are John and David**

John Niska, associate professor and coordinator of the middle level teachers' program at Rhode Island College, spent this past fall semester on a research sabbatical. For his study, *Examining the Impact of Professional Development on Middle Level Advisors*, he designed a 40-hour course focusing on advisor

content and skills. From August through March, using these newly developed materials, he instructed 25 middle level advisors from five Rhode Island schools while coaching ten of the participants on the weeks opposite the class. An out-of-state evaluator visited the participants' advisories and interviewed 80% of them in late March. Niska is now looking at the results and will report the findings shortly. In addition to his teaching duties at the college, John also does consulting nationally in the area of advisory program development and advisor skill training.

David Virtue from the University of South Carolina served as the U.S.-Norway Fulbright Roving Scholar for the lower secondary schools from August, 2010 through May, 2011. During this period, he visited nearly 60 schools all over Norway and gave more than 200 presentations to thousands of students and teachers. His presentations related to the theme *E Pluribus Unum: Dimensions of Diversity and Unity in the United States* and focused on three main areas – geography, culture, and public life – with lessons in English language and U.S. history and culture embedded throughout the presentations. The most popular presentations were *Life Inside (and Outside) U.S. Schools*, *Exploring the USA*, and *Trouble in Paradise*—a lesson about the history of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade using the music of Bob Marley. David also gave presentations on sports in U.S. society, U.S. government, and his life experiences during the Cold War. His workshops for teachers focused on social studies education and curriculum integration with an emphasis on integrating various genres of literature in instruction. The roving scholars program is unique to Norway and it gives participants the opportunity to see an entire, amazingly beautiful country. Information is at [www.fulbright.no](http://www.fulbright.no)



David Virtue in Norway

### **Nancy is the new liaison to the National Forum**

Nancy Mizelle has volunteered to serve as the liaison to NaPOMLE for the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Thank you Nancy.

## **Part II: Success in the Middle Act**

Amanda Krause (NASSP) sent the following information to me:

“As you may know, Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) reintroduced the Success in the Middle Act (H.R. 1547/S. 833) last month. We are planning to revise and resend the organizational sign-on letter from the last Congress, so please let me know if you would like your organization to be removed. Our deadline is next Friday (6/10).

- 1) I think it would be great to have any of your state associations lend their organizations' names to our effort. Please just get me the final list by COB Friday (6/10).
- 2) We're still working to put together a coordinated grassroots strategy around the bill, but I know that both NASSP and NMSA have sent out action alerts to their members. You are more than welcome to guide your own members to our Principal's Legislative Action Center (<http://app3.vocusgr.com/WebPublish/Controller.aspx?SiteName=NASSP&Definition=ViewIssue&IssueID=6256>) or "borrow" our message for your own purposes.
- 3) I believe Patti Kinney on our staff will be attending the NMSA conference in November, and she already has a great presentation about middle level education and the importance of advocacy. Please let me know if you would like her contact information."

If you have connections and would like to send this information out, it would be helpful. We will be updating you on this information as it unfolds.

### **Part III: Living the Legacy:**

"Milledgeville was pure inspiration," Susan Wood, KY.

There are always people in our lives we look up to; in middle school terms we call them heroes. Tracy Smith and Ken McEwin have provided us with a time capsule of some of the early "movers and shakers". They have created an engaging historical perspective of 20 perspectives, who they were, what they stood for, and their perceptions of the middle school movement. They have literally captured voices from our past through narrative inquiry. In addition, they have provided us with commentaries that relate current issues, current research, and current visions to past insights and experiences. At the Southeast Region Symposium, at Georgia College and State University (where POMLE began) we honored these champions of middle level education.

The symposium was an emotional, engaging, sometimes electrifying event and it reminded me that heroes come in many different forms. They come as teachers who take us under their wings and help us learn to fly. They come as mentors and friends. They come as dreamers and doers. They come as reflective, quiet, gentle spirits who take care of details and work diligently behind the scenes of events. They share their words, their organization skills, and undying spirit. They never give up on us, or the vision of hope. They share their sweat and strength and their hours and hours of time. They step up to the plate when asked and cheer from the sidelines when necessary. They write articles, engage in research, they teach, they share and check in on us. They listen. They speak the truth. They fly in from half way around the world or drive in from down the street and they are not afraid to tell us that they care. They take risks and when we fall, they are there to take our hand and walk next to us. They remind us that we matter.

May 18-20 reminded me that we come from a long line of heroes and we are all somebody's hero. May we never forget that we are all somebody's hero. Thank you to all who believe that middle level education is important. While we celebrated with the cicadas in Milledgeville, we also began to form working groups and tasks. Leaders from many aspects of middle level education joined us including pre service teachers, graduate students, classroom teachers, new professors,

tenured and non-tenured professors, administrators, retired professors, and eight of the "legacy leaders". We also had representation from NMSA, NASSP, The Forum, AERA, The professional Standards Board, MLE SIG, NCATE, and representatives from 22 states. Multiple sponsors helped make it happen: GCSU, NGC, NaPOMLE, GMSA, SCMSA, NCMS POMLE, SCMLTEI, and the middle school faculty and students at GCSU who planned and organized the event (Joanne Previts, Dan Bauer, Nancy Mizelle, Karynne Kleine, and John Lounsbury). Other planners were Ken McEwin, Tracy Smith, Susan Thompson and me.

Our task is to find ways to work together to forward the cause of middle level education. We hope you will join us in Louisville, at the NMSA conference. We have our work cut out for us and need to be strategic in our planning and intentional in our delivery of our message. Bob Ziegenfuss is coordinating the plan, collecting what was shared, and suggesting a format for people to choose the areas they are interested in to participate in our "next steps". He and I will be talking with John Lounsbury next week and Ashley Smith as well. The work of NaPOMLE is one of bringing together the different constituents to share our voices. To that end, Nancy Mizelle has volunteered to serve as a liaison to the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grade Reform. I will be heading to Washington D.C. to meet Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) as they reintroduced the Success in the Middle Act (H.R. 1547/S. 833).

It is time to use the past, use the Legacy of Middle Leaders, and to step forward together to guide our work and be willing to stand for middle school students. In Tracy's and Ken's words, "The task is now to translate the electricity one feels whenever middle school educators get together into middle school programs when we are apart" (2011, p.23).

### **Ideas**

It is always exciting to consider options and ideas for improving our organization and to share our experiences, our celebrations. As the months move towards November, we will be creating an agenda of topics to discuss at the NMSA conference. Four suggestions have been shared with me. We will talk about these at the NMSA conference. A suggestion has been to consider having state meetings during the NMSA conference. I have put a request into the planning committee to see if we can use rooms prior to the main conference. I will keep you posted. A second recommendation has been to consider raising the cost of "institutional membership" and/or limiting the number of professors who are a part of each institutions member. We will bring this up at the board meeting in November. A third proposal has been to create a different process for electing officers of NaPOMLE. Currently nominations are taken, member profiles are shared, and nominees are invited to speak on their behalf at the NaPOMLE meeting. A fourth suggestion is to consider publishing electronic materials through NaPOMLE. If you have other suggestions, please pass them on to your regional representative.

Respectfully,

*Nancy Ruppert*, President, NaPOMLE

# CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

**Current Issues in Middle Level Education**

**The premiere journal of the National  
Association of Professors of Middle Level  
Education**

SEE

<http://napomle.org/journal.html>

FOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

