

## September 2008 E- Newsletter

Dear Colleague,

Click on FYI for information about this year's mini-grant opportunities. Please share this e-newsletter with your peers and invite them to subscribe by e-mailing us at [teacher\\_center@wsboces.org](mailto:teacher_center@wsboces.org) with their names and e-mail addresses.

*Jane, Carol and Elyse*

### Opportunity! Graduate Programs Starting January 2009

Reduced off-campus pricing is offered through the Teacher Center. To register or inquire, contact the Teacher Center at 254-0107 or [teacher\\_center@wsboces.org](mailto:teacher_center@wsboces.org).

**School District Leader Program:** Stony Brook University, Open House: Oct. 15 at 4 PM

**MS in Literacy Education:** Dowling College, 36 credits: Literacy B-6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 45 credits: Literacy B-12<sup>th</sup>

**MS in Technological Systems Management:** Stony Brook University, 30 credits, Online/hybrid courses will be offered.

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### FYI

#### Announcements

**Mini-grant Opportunity.** Have you thought about applying for a mini-grant this year? It's a great opportunity to get funding for a classroom or school project that you've wanted to undertake. Your innovative project could qualify for a \$1200 individual mini-grant or, with collaboration, a \$1500 group

mini-grant. This could be your year to win! Click on <http://www.seteachercenter.org/grants.cfm> to read and download the Mini-Grant Guide and Application.

## Courses and Workshops

**October 4 & 18; 8:30 AM-4 PM: Connecting Children with Nature.** This course is based on the book *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv. The book explores the idea that the lives of children are impoverished in many ways due to the lack of contact with nature and the outdoors. Through a variety of activities, Sweetbriar's non-releasable wildlife, and our nature preserve, a nature center educator will show participants how to connect their students with nature. Teachers will acquire tools and resources for teaching students about nature outside of the classroom, including conducting sensory walks, outdoor wildlife habitat activities, and field trip information. *Instructor: Eric Young: 15 hours, 1 inservice credit, K-8, Sweetbriar Nature Center, Smithtown, Fee: \$35;* For more information or to register, contact OWL Teacher Center, 350 Daniel St. Rm. 107, Lindenhurst, NY 11757, Phone: 631-226-2772, e-mail [JBOVA@lindenhurstschools.org](mailto:JBOVA@lindenhurstschools.org)

**November 22-23, Harvard Weekend: Ancient Civilizations Workshops; Harvard Semitic and Peabody Museums**

**Saturday: Archaeology and Ancient Daily Life: Semitic Museum**

In this workshop you will learn how to use archaeological methods to analyze artifacts from Tall al-'Umayri, an ancient site in modern Jordan, in order to answer research questions. You will be assuming the work of ceramic specialists to understand how pottery is used as a diagnostic tool to understand trade, local manufacturing, and social status of ancient people. You will also learn how zoo-archaeologists analyze animal bones to determine what people ate and what types of trade took place. You will be given lesson plans for teaching ancient art as well, and will come to understand why art can only truly be interpreted through the context of the culture in which it was created. Using the Semitic Museum's full scale, fully furnished replica of an Israelite four-room house installed in the first floor gallery, you will explore how the inhabitants lived and used the artifacts and tools displayed.

**Sunday: Pseudo-Archaeology: Supermarket Aisle Archaeology and the Bible: Peabody Museum**

Early in 2007 two press conferences were held: one in New York announced that the family tomb of Jesus had been discovered in Jerusalem, and one in Jerusalem announced that the tomb of Herod the Great had been found. Why did all archaeologists instantly dismiss the former as a publicity stunt but cautiously engage the other as serious archaeology? This slide-illustrated lecture will contrast the presentation, peer review, and publication of both discoveries in order to distinguish pseudo-archaeology from real archaeology, noting along the way the dubious legacy of over a century of biblical archaeology on the quest for relics.

Cost: \$65. For registration information, please contact Dr. Peter Feinman, Institute of History, Archaeology, and Education, PO Box 41, Purchase, NY 10577, 914-933-0440, [feinmanp@ihare.org](mailto:feinmanp@ihare.org)

**NYSUT ELT courses are good for your brain—and your future. Learn more!**

[C:\Users\Pat\Desktop\NYSUT608\\_AdBrain.pdf](C:\Users\Pat\Desktop\NYSUT608_AdBrain.pdf)

## Events

**October 10-October 12, 2008:** The New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers is pleased to announce the NYSAFLT 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting: **Teaching Languages in a Changing World: Rethinking Literacies and Learners:** Saratoga Hilton and Saratoga Springs City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY. Keynote Speaker, "Tennessee" Bob Peckham, Ph.D., Professor of French, University of Tennessee.

- Choose from over 100 workshops, pre- and post-conference sessions!
- Earn a certificate for up to 18 clock hours of attendance (be sure to check your school district in-service policies)!
- Network with colleagues from around the state!
- Treat yourself to an amazing professional development experience!

All registration materials available online at <http://annualmeeting.nysaflt.org> or from NYSAFLT Headquarters [hq@nysaflt.org](mailto:hq@nysaflt.org) or (716) 836-3130.

**October 16 to October 18, 2008.** The New York State Historical Association Presents the **50th Annual October Conference for Teachers.** Registration is now open! This professional development opportunity focuses on issues, topics, and practices in social studies education. The Conference is held on the campus of the New York State Historical Association and its sister institution, The Farmers' Museum, during the picturesque autumn of Cooperstown, New York. Download a conference packet and registration form at: [http://www.nysha.org/nysha/for\\_teachers/october\\_conference](http://www.nysha.org/nysha/for_teachers/october_conference)

**October 18: Earth Education Workshop**

**October 19: Rangers of the Earth Program Day.** An **Earth Education Workshop** is for anyone who:

- recognizes that we need a serious educational response to our environmental problems,
- believes in providing direct contact with the natural world through adventuresome learning experiences,
- wants to help people develop a deeper personal relationship with their home planet.

If that's you, then join in for a full day of stimulating sessions and demonstration activities introducing earth education. Come to the **Rangers of the Earth Program Day** and find out about this earth education program where your learners will:

- learn seven secrets about the earth
- decode phrases and messages from Earth Rangers
- get to know a local natural place
- work with others to make a difference

Both full day sessions will be held at Sweet Hollow Hall, West Hills County Park, Melville. Cost: \$55. See the website for more about the Rangers of the Earth program or to download a registration flyer: [www.starflowerexperiences.org](http://www.starflowerexperiences.org).

**October 27-28, 2008: NYC AIE Roundtable Face to Face Conference:** The NYC Arts in Education Roundtable presents: Face to Face - learning from each other about arts in education. This conference, for arts administrators, artists, parents, and educators, will provide the opportunity for participants to learn more about arts in education. For more information, visit the NYC AIE Roundtable website by clicking [here](#).

## [Sharing Success Research](#)

Dear Colleagues,

Our best wishes for a successful new school year. Please [click here](#) to access research on topics relative to beginning the school year. Please [click here](#) to access research information on:

- **School Schedules** [Elem, MS, HS]
- **Homework** [Elem, MS, HS]
- **Order in the Cafeteria** [Elem, MS, HS]
- **Professional Development** [Elem, MS, HS]

## [Worthwhile Websites](#)

### [For teachers](#)

<http://www.google.com/educators/videosearch.html>. The presidential candidates are leveraging online video extensively this election year to communicate to the voting public. We can listen to candidate's speeches, watch debates and town hall meetings, and hear commentators and pundits talk about the candidates and the issues. To help students wade through these videos, we've created an Elections Video Search Gadget. Interested in a particular issue? Simply enter a query to search hundreds of hours of political footage and advertisements to find relevant quotes and excerpts about that issue, in particular. Our hope is that by using and exploring politics with this gadget, students can cut through the chatter and develop an interest in the issues and challenges confronting the nation this election season and beyond.

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/sm/index.html>. Over 70,000 paper butterflies were made last fall by children in the United States and Canada, and sent to the children who live beside the monarch sanctuaries in Mexico. These Symbolic Monarch ambassadors come back in the spring and "migrate" back to classrooms when the actual monarchs begin their journey north. **Get Ready!** Join us for the 13th Annual Symbolic Monarch Butterfly Migration. This fall's Symbolic Migration postmark deadline for migrating monarchs is **October 14, 2008**.

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/wp/?p=36>. **Historians on the Record: Podcasts from the Gilder Lehrman Institute**. Since 1996, Gilder Lehrman Historians' Forums have presented dozens of eminent historians discussing their latest books. Now you can hear these lectures on your computer, iPod, or other portable media player. To listen to a lecture on the website, click on the "play" button. If you'd like to save the lecture to your computer and listen to it at another time, right-click on the "download" button and save it either as a link or target.

### [Twelve websites for elementary and middle school students](#)

**Science Bob**  <http://www.sciencebob.com> "Science Bob" teaches science to young actors and shares his website here. A variety of topics such as weather, the human body, and science experiments are covered. Teachers will find lesson helps, and links to science website are also included.

**Science Buddies**  <http://www.sciencebuddies.org> Need help coming up with a science experiment? Visit this website to learn how to do a science experiment and to find many ideas for science experiments. All of the science experiments are rated on a scale of 1-10 according to difficulty.

**Science News for Kids**  <http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org> From the makers of the weekly magazine, Science News, comes a kid-friendly site devoted to a variety of science topics, puzzles, games, and science fair suggestions.

**Sea World/Busch Gardens Animal Information Database**  <http://www.seaworld.org> Designed especially for students and teachers, the Sea World/Busch Gardens Animal Information Database brings the world of wildlife to classrooms! Download cool animal facts, teacher's guides, quizzes, activities . . . even check out live animal cams!

**Secrets of the Lost Empires: Medieval Siege.**  <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostepires/trebuchet/> Learn about life in medieval castles and how to operate a catapult. For upper elementary and middle school students.

**Semantic Rhyming Dictionary.**  <http://www.rhymezone.com/> You can use it to write bad poetry or even good poetry. Using the three query functions described in this site, you can find words that rhyme with, almost rhyme with, or sound exactly the same as a certain target word.

**Seminole County (Fla.) Library Kids' Page.**  <http://www.scp1.lib.fl.us/kids/> Noteworthy in this site are its bright, whimsical design and its bibliographies, to which young readers are invited to attach their annotations.

**Sesame Street Central.**  <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/sesamestreet/> The kids' activities page with your friends from Sesame Street. Play games with Prairie Dawn, Elmo, and the Cookie Monster.

**Seussville.**  <http://www.seussville.com/seussville/> The Cat in the Hat, Sam-I-Am, Horton and the Whos, and the rest of the Seuss characters welcome you to Seussville, Dr. Seuss's playground in cyberspace. You can play games, chat with the Cat in the Hat, win prizes, find out about new Dr. Seuss books and CD-ROMs, and much, much more!

**Shakespeare for Kids: Activities for Children and Families.**  <http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=588> While working puzzles, answering quizzes, and learning new words, the user is learning about Shakespeare, his plays, and Elizabethan England.

**Shel Silverstein**  <http://www.shelsilverstein.com> Listen to the author read his hilarious poems aloud accompanied by animated cartoons, make a bookmark, and download puzzles and more fun in a classroom poetry kit.

**Sing-Along Songs.**  <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/music.htm> Can't remember the words to a favorite song? Don't remember the tune? Search this site and find both lyrics and music files for many classic songs.

## [NCTE Inbox](#)

### [News](#)

**The Mystery of the Struggling Reader.** NCTE President-Elect Kylene Beers notes that "struggling readers don't possess the strategies necessary to get through the text, to figure out how to get through the problem." NCTE members Maryanne Wolf and Nell Duke are also quoted. [Minneapolis-St. Paul Magazine, September 2008](#)

**Voting for a Book.** Students at Ebert Elementary School in Colorado are learning about the elections by campaigning for their "best books." [All Things Considered, NPR, August 29, 2008](#)

**Lights, Camera . . . Debate; and Worksheet on How to Watch a Presidential Debate.** NCTE consultant Frank Baker gives advice on how to use a media-literacy perspective when watching the presidential debates. [Cable in the Classroom, September 2008](#) (scroll down to article and worksheet).

### [Blog...](#)

**Social Networking: The Ning's the Thing.** What's a Ning? What's a social network, for that matter? And how can a teacher use them? NCTE INBOX blogger Traci Gardner explains it all in [this week's NCTE INBOX Blog](#).

### [Ideas](#)

**Lesson Plans for Writing Now.** NCTE's newest policy research brief "[Writing Now](#)" explores what writing means in our changing world. The brief defines key terms, debunks common myths about school-based writing, outlines our understanding of writing now, and shares research-based recommendations for effective writing instruction and assessment. For the next step, try any of the following ReadWriteThink lesson plans, which all explore ways we write and teach writing now:

#### **Elementary Level Lessons**

- [Authentic Writing Experiences and Math Problem-Solving Using Shopping Lists](#) (E)
- [Once Upon a Time Rethought: Writing Fractured Fairy Tales](#) (E)
- [Teaching the Compare and Contrast Essay through Modeling](#) (E)
- [Using Picture Books to Teach Characterization in Writing Workshop](#) (E)

#### **Middle Level Lessons**

- [Cooking Up Descriptive Language: Designing Restaurant Menus](#) (M)
- [Fairy Tale Autobiographies](#) (M)
- [Leading to Great Places in the Middle School Classroom](#) (M)
- [Reading and Writing Workshop: \*Freak the Mighty\*](#) (M)

#### **Secondary and College Level Lessons**

- [Creative Outlining—From Freewriting to Formalizing](#) (S-C)

- [Modeling Academic Writing through Scholarly Article Presentations](#) (S-C)
- [Persuading Readers with Endorsement Letters](#) (S-C)
- [The Children's Picture Book Project](#) (S-C)

**Got the Smartest Card Yet?** Kick off September by encouraging your students to explore the many wonderful resources available at the library during [National Library Card Sign-Up Month](#), sponsored by the American Library Association. The [calendar entry on ReadWriteThink](#) offers lesson plans, classroom activities, and related websites. After exploring the resources in your school library, inspire students with the ReadWriteThink lesson plan [Dear Librarian: Writing a Persuasive Letter](#) (E). This activity draws on *Emily's Runaway Imagination* by Beverly Cleary, in which the character of Mama writes to the State Librarian asking for help starting a library in their town. Using this model, students use their persuasive writing skills to write their own letters to a librarian requesting that a specific text be added to the collection. Engage your students in an activity that will help them truly understand how libraries work! To learn how, read "[The Wall: Engaging Students in Real Work](#)" (M) from *Voices from the Middle*, which describes how students designed and created a 58-foot mural depicting the Dewey Decimal System to adorn the school library and assist library users in finding information. The *Classroom Notes Plus* article "[Adolescents Reading: A Field of Dreams?](#)" (M-S) discusses how teachers can use author blogs, audiobooks, booktalks, and podcasts to share books with students and motivate them to read. The article concludes with strategies for monitoring students' reading progress. For many college level teachers, the challenge is not in teaching library research, but in helping students see that they are doing good research all the time. Explore the Teaching Resource Collection on the [College Research Paper](#) (C) for eight articles and other resources to help writers make the most of the library on their campus and in their community.

**English Language Learners in Our Schools: Meeting the Challenge.** The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) reported that in 2004-05 there were over five million English language learners (ELLs) in schools in the United States (NCELA, 2006) -- 65% more than a decade ago. As the number of English language learners has increased, the politics of English language learning have become more prominent and complicated. For an overview of the issues and some resources, see the [NCTE Policy Collection on English Language Learners](#).

## [In the News](#)

### [Eye on Curriculum](#)

**Differentiated instruction individualizes student learning.** In an interview with *Teacher Magazine*, Carol Ann Tomlinson, who has studied differentiated instruction extensively as a University of Virginia education professor, says she believes differentiated instruction is a more positive approach to student learning, and offers advice on the method. "The reason I think differentiated instruction is important is that students do vary in so many ways, and our student populations are becoming more academically diverse," she says. [Teacher Magazine](#) (9/10)

**Self-confidence feeds girls' interest in math, sciences.** Girls who show little initial interest in science may still excel if their parents and teachers help them build confidence in the subjects, according to a new study by a research team at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. "The

relationship between confidence and interest is close," says Distinguished Professor Nadya Fouad. "If they feel they can do it, it feeds their interest." [ScienceDaily](#) (9/8)

**Should students choose between college-prep and vocational tracks?** Proponents of vocational education like California high school teacher Chris Peters say a radical overhaul could make U.S. secondary schools more effective. High-schoolers should spend their first two years meeting basic standards, supporters say, then if they pass subject exams, they could choose between a college-prep track and a variety of community college vocational programs. [The Washington Post](#) (9/1)

**Stretched schools tally more student poverty, homelessness.** Even as many U.S. districts are increasingly strapped by growing food and fuel costs, more students are qualifying for free and reduced-price lunches. The number of homeless students in Mobile, Ala., schools, for instance, tripled at the end of the 2007-08 school year over 2006-07 rates and will likely continue to rise, a school social worker said. [The New York Times](#) (8/31)

**ELL portfolios boosted Virginia schools' scores.** Allowing Virginia's English-language learners to demonstrate their progress through portfolios, rather than the standardized reading tests taken by classmates who speak English fluently, likely contributed to the rising scores for many northern Virginia schools that have many immigrant students, educators say. "We are now using an appropriate test," said Fairfax County Superintendent Jack Dale. [The Washington Post](#) (8/28)

### Professional Leadership

**Residencies allow newcomers to glean veterans' knowledge.** Classroom-based teacher-residencies in urban schools may be an effective way to attract, train and retain new teachers, according to two new reports. About 90% of teachers in a Boston residency program and 95% of those in a Chicago program were still working as classroom educators in their districts after three years, one report found. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (9/11)

**Math grades tied to primitive "number sense".** Students with good "number sense" -- the innate ability to rapidly estimate the number of items in a group -- tend to earn better math grades across their academic careers, according to new research published online in the journal Nature. "The link between math achievement and number sense is really stunning," said one expert. "The potential here could be very important." [The Washington Post](#) (9/8)

### Technology

**Student responders give educators nearly instant test results.** A Florida elementary school is experimenting with using hand-held devices as a way for students to record their answers to standardized test questions. "If we think this will assist with student achievement, it may be the wisest investment we ever make," said board member Allen Altman of the units, which cost about \$1,800 for a set of 32. [The Tampa Tribune \(Fla.\)](#) (9/12)

**Amazon to sell computers for One Laptop Per Child.** Amazon.com will sell low-priced laptops during the holiday shopping season. The computers are from the One Laptop Per Child Foundation of

Cambridge, Mass., which is hoping that selling through Amazon will solve previous delivery problems. [The Dallas Morning News/The Boston Globe](#) (9/8)

**Report: 21st-century skills key to global competitiveness.** If the U.S. does not create an education system that is capable of imparting 21st-century skills to learners, the country's economy and competitive standing in the world could suffer, says the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in a new report. "We need to recognize that a 21st-century education is the bedrock of competitiveness -- the engine, not simply an input, of the economy," the report states. [eSchool News](#) (9/10) , [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (9/10)

**Study: Whiteboards encourage active learning.** Science Daily (9/5)

**More districts scrap paper.** After years of copying class materials, Virginia teacher Kerri Serrano made everything electronic, allowing students to read materials, turn in homework and take tests on their laptops. More teachers and school boards across the country are taking similar measures, saying electronic documents are more efficient and produce less waste. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (9/4)

## Policy Watch

### **Beverage-industry report: Fewer sugary drinks sold in schools**

Two years into a three-year effort to reduce the amount of sugar that children drink, the type of beverages sold in schools has changed significantly, according to an analysis. A beverage-industry group reported Wednesday that overall, 58% fewer calories are present in drinks shipped to schools. [The Boston Globe/Associated Press](#) (9/10)

### **Obama proposes \$19 billion to overhaul education**

Sen. Barack Obama unveiled his education plan Tuesday in Ohio, outlining plans to spend about \$19 billion to implement programs including voluntary preschool for all, better pay for math and science teachers and \$4,000 tax credits for college students who participate in community service. [The Boston Globe](#) (9/10), [Google/Associated Press](#) (9/10), [The New York Times](#) (9/9)

**Social responsibility meets the unvaccinated:** About 135,000 children started kindergarten in U.S. schools last fall with exemptions from vaccine requirements, according to a media company's review of data submitted to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "At some point, we're going to be forced to decide whether it is an inalienable right to catch and transmit potentially fatal infections," said one infectious disease specialist. [Ventura County Star \(Calif.\)/Scripps Howard News Service](#) (free registration) (9/7)

### **Sex education fails to change many teens' behavior**

The pregnancy of Bristol Palin -- the 17-year-old daughter of Republican vice-presidential nominee Gov. Sarah Palin -- has reignited the debate over sex education and which is more effective: abstinence-only education or a more comprehensive approach. But teen-pregnancy experts say teens are bombarded with so many hormones and mixed messages, there's only so much any sex-education class can do.

[Houston Chronicle/Chicago Tribune \(9/6\)](#), [USA TODAY \(9/8\)](#), [Detroit Free Press/Gannett News Service \(9/6\)](#), [National Public Radio \(text and audio\) \(9/5\)](#)

## Learning and Teaching

**Secrets for science educators.** When science educator Anne Jolly, who was named Alabama's 1994 Teacher of the Year, began teaching she was shocked to find practically no equipment, a less-than-pristine classroom and skeptical students. She offers tips to help other teachers develop business partnerships and grants to obtain needed supplies, find new ways to engage students and help them learn teamwork and enlist the support of colleagues and parents. [Teacher Magazine \(9/10\)](#)

**Back-to-school night need not cause anxiety.** Instead of freezing when parents ask tough questions, teachers should prepare in advance their responses to likely inquiries, print out a handout with relevant classroom rules and find ways to diplomatically defer conversations better addressed one-on-one, writes National Board-certified teacher Marsha Ratzel. Most parents just want to know that educators will listen to them, treat their child fairly and teach them important skills, she says. [Teacher Magazine \(8/27\)](#)

## NCLB

**Half of California high schools fail to make AYP.** Even with more lenient standards than their elementary and middle-school counterparts, just 48% of California high schools met progress goals under NCLB during the 2007-08 school year. Moreover, if the state used standardized test scores to rate high schools rather than exit exams, hundreds more high schools would have failed to have met all federal goals, according to a Los Angeles Times analysis. [Los Angeles Times \(free registration\) \(9/5\)](#)

**Districts 'Scrubbing' Away Thousands of Students' Test Scores":** [The Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 8, 2008](#)

**Bush Education Law: Shift Ahead?** This could be the last time students go back to school under the current No Child Left Behind law. While opinions on the law are split (see the [40th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll](#)), it's sure that the new president and Congress will be dealing with the law next year. [The Christian Science Monitor, August 21, 2008.](#)

## In the Field

**Minimum-wage hikes boost teen unemployment.** Federal minimum-wage increases have eliminated 238,000 teen jobs, keeping young people from learning valuable skills, says Rick Berman, executive director of the Employment Policies Institute. "A summer job for a teen is much more than a paycheck; it's a chance to gain important skills and learn the 'invisible curriculum' that comes from having a job, answering to a boss and dealing with co-workers," he said. [Seacoastonline \(Portsmouth, N.H.\) \(9/10\)](#)

**Parents of overweight children most worried about bullying.** Though parents overall say childhood obesity is a serious problem, parents of overweight children are more concerned with

bullying, a new poll shows. "We found that parents with overweight or obese children actually view bullying as a greater problem than childhood obesity," said the director of the National Poll on Children's Health. [Yahoo!/HealthDay News](#) (9/11)

**Report examines high rates of tobacco use among college students.** An American Lung Association report found about one in five college students smoked cigarettes in 2006, which the group attributes in part to aggressive tobacco industry marketing on college campuses. The report calls on colleges and universities to ban smoking at all indoor and outdoor facilities, offices and dormitories, offer smoking-cessation programs, and provide more education on the harmful health effects of smoking. [Medscape/Reuters](#) (free registration) (9/8), [Yahoo!/HealthDay News](#) (9/8)

**Groups: Cultural norms may matter more than sex ed.** U.S. teens are much more likely to give birth than many of their European counterparts regardless of whether those countries offer sex education, new data suggest. "They are far more open to discussing sex ... than in the U.S.," said James Wagoner, president of Advocates for Youth, which supports comprehensive sex education. "There is a cultural norm that teen pregnancy ... interferes with your future career." [USA TODAY](#) (9/9)

## *A Light Touch*

### **Life in the 1500s!**

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all, the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained, it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying, It's raining cats and dogs.

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection.. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, Dirt poor. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you

opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway Hence the word threshold.

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme, Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot, nine days old.

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, bring home the bacon. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat..

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

There's no trick to being a humorist when you have the whole government working for you.

Will Rogers





# THE STATE OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND WELLNESS IN OUR SCHOOLS

## FEATURED SPEAKERS:

**Thomas McDonough, MD, Chief of Pediatrics at NSUH/LIJ Huntington Hospital**  
*The state of childhood obesity on a local level.*

**Maureen Simone, MS, RD, CDE, CDN**  
*Food labels and misleading marketing practices on food packaging.*

**Janine DiNatale, Founder - Wellness Across America**  
*Wellness Across America is a non-profit organization whose mission is to coordinate the efforts of established wellness organizations and school wellness initiatives to the home environment. The Elementary School Program is an interdisciplinary learning program that provides children and their families with the information necessary to make life-long healthy choices and prevent or minimize the obesity problems facing our nation.*

**Judy Cummings, Assistant Director for Health/Physical Education & Athletics - Bay Shore Schools.**  
*Wellness Across America has made a difference in the lives of children and their families, learn how your district can use this program to achieve similar results.*

**Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2008

**Time:** 10:00am–12:30pm

**Place:** 31 Lee Avenue, Wheatley Heights

**Audience:** School Administrators, Wellness Committee Members,  
School Nurses, PTA Members, Health and Physical Educators

Please register by October 1, 2008

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or Fax Registration to: Joann Zerbo, L.I. Regional Student Support Services 631-595-6843 • FAX 631-623-4914

In order for a school based Wellness Policy to produce sustainable behavior modifications for its students, a family-centered component is necessary.

*Schools are the conduit to the family, the real change begins at home.*



*making a difference one connection at a time.*