

student leadership

The Student Leadership Training Program Alumni Newsletter

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VOLUME 5 ISSUE 7

MARCH-APRIL, 2005

From where I sit by Jim Fitzgerald

Recently President Bush has been stumping for his reforms of Social Security. One prop in his presentation has been a ten year old boy. Who he refers to frequently to illustrate his point of the need for reform.

Putting aside the debate about Social Security, I have been thinking a lot about age bias. In more than a few schools where I have worked recently different elements of age bias has been evident.

In one, the high school student leaders have not been invited by the Superintendent to participate in the interview process for a new principal.

In several others, high school students have been shunned or dismissed from hearings on the school budget because they are too young to "understand."

Last year and again this year, a legislator in California proposed a bill that would provide 16 year olds voting rights. While his proposal is basically a publicity stunt and it provides fractional votes for teens (each vote by a teen is given partial credit towards a whole vote), I think

it is time to give the idea of the 16 year old vote some serious consideration.

I wonder how many of the current school "reforms" would exist, if the voices of the customers of those reforms were heard?

Special interest groups in every community inflict a great deal of influence on the budget process. All across our region as the school population has grown and grown over the past 10 years, so has the student to staff ratio. Fees for parking. Fees for sports. Fees for activities. Fees for books. Fees for library use. Fees, fees and more fees.

As a former social studies teacher, all I can hear in the background are echoes of "no taxation without representation."

Every generation of Americans until recently has been able to expect free education as given.

While I agree that the system needs reform. The price of reform should not be inflicted in providing LESS to today's students.

Last night I wrote to all of my elected representatives inviting them to take a position for today's youth by backing any measure that would consider a lower voting age.

I doubt that this will cause any of them to jump on the bandwagon. But I suggest you do the same. I also suggest that you ask your town aldermen, selectmen, school committee where they stand and why.

Whether or not you have voting privileges—express your opinions to the elected officials, someone has to represent the opinions of the student population in your community.

Be more than a prop. Stand up for what is right, even if you are standing alone.

Summer Conferences

Registrations for all our summer conferences are underway in earnest! There are just over 16 weeks to go before our summer conferences kick off. All of the applications are available on line as pdf files at www.sltp.info

OTS

There is one session which is open to all forms of officer teams – from full cabi-

nets to co-captains – from clubs to classes to student government. (The team requirement is that there must be at least a pair of officers)

July 1-2

LTC

There are four sessions. Although there are just over 100 slots available at this point.

July 5-9;
July 12-16;

July 26-30
and Aug 2-6

AIC

There are three sessions and approximately 34 slots available.

July 13-16;
July 27-30;
and Aug 3-6

TLC

There is only one session and there are 3 slots left.

July 6-9

Adviser Certification

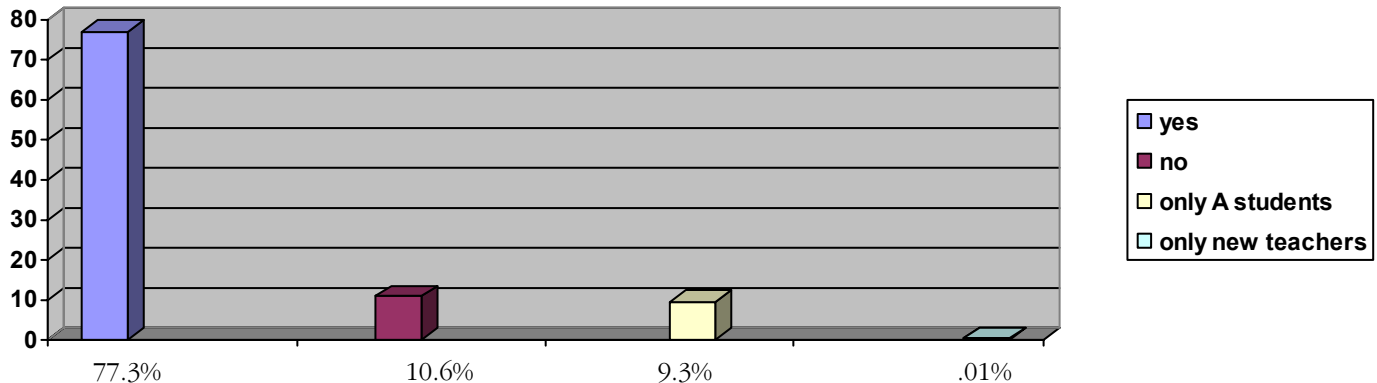
There is only one session and there are 10 slots left.

July 27-30

And the Survey says ...

Last month on the SLTP home page, we asked the question:

Should students evaluate teachers?



I voted no by Dr. Richard Hiltz, Vice Principal, Student Council Adviser

All it takes is just one look at any of the websites evaluating teachers and professors and any desire to include students in the evaluation process slides right by.

Students would just not take the process seriously enough. Teachers are professionals and should be treated professionally. That means their evaluation should be completed by fellow professionals. Amateurs no matter how well meaning are not capable of grasping the intricacies of lesson plan-

ning and implementation.

Evaluations should not become popularity contests. Nor should they be based on laxity in discipline.

It makes sense to have students involved in the hiring of new faculty and administration. I have served on several committees that had student participation. Those students asked practical and direct questions that the adults on the committee might not have asked.

But when it comes to evaluating the lesson or the facilitation of the lesson, there are too many factors that students might not understand and that lack of understanding would certainly reflect poorly in their evaluation.

I voted yes by Helen Fitzgerald, SLTP Staff—CASA Executive Director

As long as it is a real evaluation and not some simplistic checklist, then students have a place in the evaluation process.

The main intent for any real evaluation is to catch people doing things right—not to catch them doing things wrong.

Students could offer incredible insight on techniques and methodology, insight that would allow pro-

fessionals to sharpen their skills.

Most evaluation forms are what I call failure forms. Basically these forms are checklists and frequently they call for the “evaluator” to rate on a scale of 1-5. The forms are designed to illicit negative feedback. If that format is utilized, we should expect that the students would respond in kind. After all we have taught them to follow directions.

Evaluations should be designed to help teachers get better at their craft. Hearing from the customer is more than necessary for improvement.

In the mail

This week every school in our region will receive the final application packet for the DifferenceMaker Showcase. Please direct this to the attention of the service clubs, NHS, StuCo and every group in your school concerned with community service.

Also, the third and Final Mailing of SLTP's entire Application Packets will arrive at your school in the next two weeks -- please direct this packet to the students and advisers who are interested in learning how to make a difference.

Applications for all of our summer conferences are rolling in at this point. We are expecting our highest enrollment to date. One very important note—because of staffing limitations this year, we may have to restrict the size of some of the sessions -- so if a particular session is the only one you can attend -- register soon. Applications are readily available on line. Do not be left out.

One deadline is fast approaching -- and that is the deadline for TLC (the Leadership Cen-

ter, which is our most advanced leadership seminar) -- the deadline to apply for TLC is APRIL 25.

Ask the doctor (send your questions to: askthedoctor@sltp.info)

Dear Doctor SLTP,

Our NHS Chapter has agreed to doing a service project where the entire group is involved.

Do you have any suggestions?

Eager in NJ

Dear Eager,

Congratulations, individual service projects are fun, but the fun increases geometrically when a whole group gets involved. There are so many ideas, I am not sure I can pick just one.

Your local food bank probably needs the most physical help. Not just in the collection of food, but in the sorting and distribution as well.

Then depending on your location, you might be able to volunteer at a food kitchen, the local library or even around the school.

You might also consider initiating a service project. Cleaning up or sprucing up at a housing for the elderly project— working with the children at a hospital — staging a Blood Drive — cleaning up a park — restoring a children's outdoor play center — your only limit is your imagination — Popcorn the possibilities.

AND join us at the DifferenceMaker Showcase on April 3! You are sure to come away with some ideas and tips to make the project a success.

Dear Doctor SLTP,

All but two bathrooms (one male, one female) in our school are locked ALL day. AND the teachers do not even have keys to unlock the other bathrooms. When we have to go — we have to go clear across the building to the open bathrooms (where there is a teacher on duty) or go to the nurse.

What can we do?

Doing the PP Dance in MA

Dear Doing,

The lack of basic respect for human dignity scares and disgusts me. Locked bathrooms abound in New England. The excuse is always security. But your school has taken it to a new level removing the keys from the faculty and leaving all the doors locked!

Without a bathroom, washing one's hands becomes impossible, let alone all of the basic bathroom calls. Emergencies and embarrassment must abound — but then so must a lack of general health, as your situation is anything but healthy!

Do some basic research on the health issues. Present the research to your principal. But you may need to take your case to the superintendent or school committee — plan this presentation to be as professional as possi-

ble. Be prepared for that presentation. You are going to need some support from parents and registered voters. Good luck!

Dear Doctor SLTP,

What is the best way to raise money?

Broke in RI

Dear Broke,

The best way to raise money is to be born rich.

There are no guaranteed easy ways to fundraise. There are some simple rules.

First, make sure everyone involved BELIEVES in why you are raising money (it's a lot of work, so the raisers must understand why and know how the money will be used).

Second, make sure you put some FUN in the FUNdraising. It's a lot of work, and everyone is busy. Fun goes a long way.

Third, try to sell things that people can USE.

Good luck!

National Day of Silence—April 13, 2005

The Day of Silence, a project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in collaboration with the United States Student Association (USSA), is a student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment -- in effect, the silencing -- experienced by LGBT students and their allies.

The Day of Silence is sched-

uled to take place on **April 13, 2005**.

The Day of Silence is an awesome opportunity to create more inclusive school environments and make some noise by being visibly silent. The Day of Silence has been taking place annually since 1996 and this year tens of thousands of students are expected to participate. Last year many of the SLTP member high schools and colleges participated. And already 25 of our member schools have

tapped to indicate they are participating this year.

For more information about the Day of Silence visit:

[http://
www.dayofsilence.org/](http://www.dayofsilence.org/)

The DifferenceMaker Showcase—April 3, 2005

The *DifferenceMaker Showcase* is a very special conference. We believe that service should not be a “have to.” Service should be a “get to.” Service is leadership in action. This conference is about expanding service opportunities, learning how to stage particular events and exploring the possibilities for service inside and outside of school.

Our attendance goal is 250 – just one carload. It’s

only 10 bucks each!

We’ll learn who won the Student Leader of the Year.

We’ll learn who won citations for Public Service.

We’ll learn who won citations for Personal Development.

We’ll celebrate the Lifetime of Difference Award winners.

We’ll learn, we’ll listen, we’ll laugh, we’ll see old friends and make some new

ones.

So mark your calendar now – bring your friends and your friends’ friends for a spectacular spring afternoon. It’s **Sunday, April 3rd.**

See page 8 for a registration form.

National Bullying Awareness Week– April 17-23

Six years ago, on April 20th, 1999, our nation's worst school shooting took place at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Thirteen students and a teacher were killed, and 23 other students were wounded. The two young attackers, who had been bullied by their schoolmates, also died.

We must learn from this tragedy. We must join the organizations, school districts, teachers, and parents who have already spoken out against bullying.

We must do our best to make people understand the harm it can cause. In addition, we must show younger students, through actions as well as words, that their emotional and physical well-being is important to us.

SLTP’s fight against bullying in school must not, of course, be limited to one week a year. However, in remembrance of the Columbine shootings, and as a symbol of our year-round struggle against bullying, we invite you to

do something and to join the national effort to raise awareness.

For more information visit:

<http://www.bullypolice.org>

The Blame Game by Sarah Bourbeau, SLTP Staff

I just realized something that I thought might be helpful for other people to know if they didn't know it already so I thought I'd share through the alumni newsletter. Last year I drove myself into a hole ... I was falling apart by the end of the year and I think I figured out partially why...I took the "leaders accept blame" thing WAY to far and just blamed everything on myself...and it stunk so I wanted to "warn" others so they don't have the same problem...

One common issue with student leaders in the world today involves blame. When do you accept it? How far is too far? How much do you take blame to heart? Let it be stated

that accepting blame and blaming yourself are two different circumstances with a fine line between them. To get to the root of this issue, let's focus on each specific statement. First "accepting blame"- what does this imply? That something has happened in your group or that your group has "failed". Accepting blame means that you, as a representative of the group, accept the blame coming at the group rather than reflecting it off onto other members. When you accept blame the situation can be assessed and learned from and the group can move on productively. Now look at the second statement "blaming yourself"- what does this imply? Taking the shortfall of the group

and making it solely your own issue? Allowing others to blame you instead of focusing on the problem and fixing it? If accepting blame is productive blaming yourself seems far from productive. Though initially it may seem more helpful to the group to blame yourself in the long run there are more opportunities for group growth if the leader accepts the blame and then allows the group to fix the situation.

Conference Profile—OTS

Strengthen your skills to persuade, motivate and engage your student activity group. If you are ready to take your group to the next level, OTS is for you!. Join our team for this interactive seminar where you'll learn and experience the powerful keys to developing your group into a team. Some of the goals of the Officer Training Seminar are to help you:

- ⇒ Develop a purposeful and meaningful mission for your group
- ⇒ Learn the specific duties and responsibilities of each office (Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, President, etc.)
- ⇒ Design action plans and calendars

- ⇒ Develop strategies to work through cliques and to motivate the group
- ⇒ Develop plans to create workable solutions
- ⇒ Develop a greater sense of belonging among the group's members

Throughout the OTS, all participants will experience one to one coaching and personalized feedback.

The OTS is open to officer teams only. A minimum of two officers are required. Any combination of club or activity group officers and their adviser may participate.

Designing and facilitating meaningful meetings is among the most

significant responsibilities of any officer team. Too often meetings are held simply because it is meeting day. Too often meetings lack the passion that student activities deserve.

At OTS, we explore the techniques necessary to make meetings more meaningful.

Join us for two days you will never forget. Organizations can reserve their spaces at OTS and then after officers are elected register those officers via fax.

The 2005 SLTP Conference Schedule

Where leaders learn HOW
to make a difference!

- **The DifferenceMaker Showcase**
April 3
- **Leadership Training Conferences (4)**
July 5 - 9; July 12 - 16; July 26 - 30;
Aug 2 - 6
- **Advanced Leadership Conferences (3)**
July 13 - 16; July 27 - 30; Aug 3 - 6
- **The Leadership Center**
July 6 - 9
- **Officer Training Seminar**
July 1 - 2
- **Adviser Certification**
July 27 - 30
- **The ReEnergizer Conference**
November 26

We're on the
Web!
www.sltp.info
Information for
Parents, Teachers,
Students,
Administrators
Applications *
Photos

Monthly Activity Spotlight

Teacher Appreciation by Helen Fitzgerald, CASA Executive Director

There is no shortage of reasons why teachers deserve special recognition. However, sometimes groups come up short on new or exciting ways to do it.

Here's a list of ideas and suggestions that have worked for me. Over the years I have been able to see many different and innovative ways student leaders can recognize their teachers. The only limits are the imagination and willingness of the student leaders.

Below you will find ideas big and small—good luck!

- ◆ Car windshield wash — easy to organize — relatively quick for a large group and inexpensive—leave thank you notes on each car.
- ◆ Continental Breakfast Reception—bagels, muffins, coffee, tea and juice before school — involve the school café and the local donut shoppe
- ◆ Decorate the Faculty lunch room — celebrate the colleges represented among the faculty—do the research and then make up the signs
- ◆ Cookouts/cookins—food is always a great way to celebrate and bring people together—do whatever your budget will allow
- ◆ Use candy bars for random recognition—\$100,000 dollar bars or Pay Day on pay days (as bonuses) — Lifesaver rolls — Mints (cuz they are worth a mint) — get creative, look around the candy aisle and see all the possibilities — one note, use the Halloween sized candy bars — else this project becomes expensive
- ◆ Faculty Socials—each member of the student group is responsible to bake something for the afternoon get together-
- ◆ Apple fest—after spending an afternoon at a pick your own apple orchard—deliver a basket of the apples to the Teacher's room
- ◆ College Day—faculty wear their school colors and the student group puts the name of their college on each teacher's desk incitating where they attended college
- ◆ Birthday and Holiday Cards—cards should be delivered or sent of each staff member and should be personalized for that specific person

The Poker Phenomenon: *The dangers of childhood gambling* by Daniel Lombardi

When was the last time you saw the deck of cards in your household? Over the past few years, a dangerous phenomenon has spread through colleges, high schools and even junior high.

Lately, many forms of media have commercialized the game of poker. Movies and television shows, like Rounders, Ocean's 11, or ESPN's broadcast of the World Series of Poker glorify poker as a skill rather than a game of odds.

Poker nights have spread to younger teens, who do not necessarily have the financial un-

derstanding to differentiate between gambling and fun. Not only are they using it as a social outlet, but are using the internet to gamble with money as well.

Poker alone is a relatively harmless game. It is when money is added the game can take a costly turn. Many children are losing money at alarming rates. Sometimes it is not their own. Some children and adolescents are using their parent's credit cards and using the numbers to gamble online. As a parent, you should check you credit card statements and online history. Also, talk to your

children about the dangers on gambling even if there are no present signs of a problem. Some websites and resources that can help are as follows:

<http://www.ncpgambling.org/>

<http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/>

Acronym Flashback

SMART Goal Setting System

A goal is a goal if it is:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Action Based

R = Realistic

T = Time defined



Tech time with Adam by Adam Travis, SLTP Conference Director

Protecting your computer from Online Threats, part 2 – Spam/Spyware.

Unfortunately, having antivirus software does not protect you from spam and spyware. Spam in itself is just a nuisance, and will not harm your computer, unless you open a message that contains a virus or something else that may harm your computer. Still, it is inconvenient and can become overwhelming. The good news is that many Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have free spam filters, though their effectiveness varies. If you really hate spam, you may want to buy some software to protect yourself. Check

out this article from PC World for more information: <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,115885,00.asp>

The good news is that Anti-Spyware programs are getting better, and the best ones are free. In PC World tests, Lavasoft's Ad-aware 6 Plus and Spybot Search and Destroy performed best. Ad-aware is better at finding the adware variety, and Spybot is better at finding and removing the spyware type of threats. The bad news is that these programs are only about 57% effective, and none of the other products tested were even close to being that good. Some products were found

to be almost completely ineffective, despite their cost. The free version of Ad-aware is not as good as the one you pay for; both can be found at <http://www.lavasoft.com/>. My personal favorite is Spybot, which can be downloaded from <http://www.safer-networking.org/>. For more information, see <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,115939,00.asp>

