



Council for Exceptional Children

MINNESOTA

The voice and vision of special education

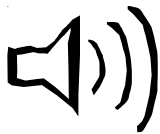
# Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children

Newsletter

Vol. 17, No. 3

MAY 2006

## ANNOUNCING



The 2007 Special Education Conference

February 21-23

Sheraton, Minneapolis South in Bloomington, MN

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## IN THIS ISSUE

The New IDEA .....	1
Letter from President .....	2
Board of Directors List .....	2
MNCEC Mission & Goals .....	2
2006 Conference Wrap-up .....	3
Special Award Winners .....	4
Membership Report .....	5
Election Results .....	6
Div. Career Develop. & Transition ....	6
Strategy: Generalizing School-Home ..	7
Strategy: Assistive Technology .....	7
MNCCBD Leadership Change .....	8
CAN Report .....	9
Calendar of Events .....	10
Book Reviews .....	11
Blue Bottle Mystery and Al Capone Does My Shirts	
Letter from the Editor .....	12

## The NEW IDEA!

By **Roberta Kaufman**  
MNCEC Board Member  
St. Paul Public Schools



Participants at February's MNCEC/CCBD Special Education Conference in Rochester heard a summary of significant issues associated with the new IDEA legislation. The keynote address was given by Deb Ziegler, Associate Executive Director for Communication Services, Council for Exceptional Children. Participants thinking they might hear a quick overview of changes in PL108-446, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004**, walked away with 58 pages of PowerPoint notes documenting the most recent statutory implications of the law.



Deborah Ziegler

As background, President Bush signed the bill into law on Dec. 3, 2004. Though originally it was thought final regulations would be ready by December 2005, it is now anticipated they will be available in early Fall 2006, two years after the law was signed.

Among the areas pointed out by Ziegler as issues CEC has concerns about and is continuing to monitor are:

### Definitions of Highly Qualified (Section 602)

- There has been a great deal of discussion related to the category of special education teachers who are teaching one or more core academic subjects only to children with disabilities held to alternative academic standards. At some point the phrase (most severely cognitively disabled) was added. CEC is unsure of the implications of this.
- Per the HOUSSE process, language was added stating veteran teachers could demonstrate competence through the HOUSSE process (including a single evaluation for all core academic subjects). It is unclear what that single evaluation should look like.
- Language describing a reciprocal consultative model was not in the final law.

continued on page 6

# Letter from the President

by Larry Iwen



## Spring Into Action!

In fall of 2005 when I began my year as President, I stressed the fact that change is good and indeed it has been good for the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children. Several exciting and positive changes have taken place during the past year including:

- The adoption of a new MNCEC logo.
- A restructuring of the State Unit's chapters, disbanding inactive chapters, and starting new student chapters.
- An official name change from "The Minnesota Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children" to simply, "The Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children."
- The selection of a new site for the annual conference that proved to be a very successful choice.
- The launch of several statewide meetings to explain and de-mystify the HOUSS process.
- A revision of the MNCEC legislative platform for 2006.
- Additional presence and visibility at other special education conferences to help pass the word about the work our organization does.
- The election of two new board members.
- The review, revision, and unanimous approval to adopt a new MNCEC Constitution.

All of these changes were good, if not great, for the organization. But as president, I am very well aware of the fact that these changes were not completed by me working alone or by the efforts of any one individual. I was fortunate during

*continued on page 4*

## Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children Mission

To improve practices and resources for persons working on behalf of individuals with exceptionality in the state of Minnesota.

## Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children Goals

- To promote and utilize systems for timely communication with our membership.
- To promote quality professional development opportunities including a quality conference.
- To support the professional development of pre-service teachers.
- To increase our involvement in political issues impacting our membership and the individuals they serve.

## 2005 – 06 MNCEC Board of Directors

**President:** Larry Iwen  
**President-Elect:** Jeanne Danneker  
**Past President:** Melissa Schaller  
**Secretary:** Roberta Kaufman  
**Treasurer:** Mark Krug  
**CAN Coordinators:** Roberta Kaufman  
Bryce Fornes-Bates

**Elections** Mary Ellen Wade  
**Membership** Mary McGrath

**Representative Assembly:** Steven Kaatz  
Carol Long

**Student Advisor:** Marilyn Hukriede

**Student Governor** Amy Beckstrand

**Student Officer to National Board:** Justin Lien

**Publications:** Carol Long

**Newsletter Layout:** Lynne Olson

### Directors:

Dawn Allen  
Brad Benson  
Nancy Dumke  
Krista Fisher  
Gary Lewis  
David Nelson  
Nancy Recibe  
Jim Smith

### Division Representatives:

Steve Schoenbauer, DCDT  
Daryl Miller, CASE/MASE  
Lonna Moline, CCBD  
Jane Roundtree, DEC

**Website:** [www.mncec.org](http://www.mncec.org)



# Brigh IDEAS 2006 Special Education Conference

## Wrap-Up!



By Jeanne Danneker  
2006 MNCEC/CCBD Conference Chair  
Professor, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

The 2006 MNCEC/CCBD conference has come and gone, but hopefully the Bright IDEAS gained by conference goers will shine on. The pre-conference session was presented by Martha Simpson. Participants learned a step-by-step process that could be used by a team to conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA). They also learned how to use that information to plan positive behavior supports to increase the success of students with behavioral challenges. Martha's hands-on, practical approach was greatly appreciated by those who attended her presentation.

On Thursday morning the Annual Board meeting provided an opportunity for MNCEC members to participate in voting to update our constitution. A committee from the Board of Directors spent many hours prior to the conference going through the old constitution with a fine tooth comb and we now have a constitution that provides a solid foundation for the efforts of the MNCEC



Board as we work to support our members and Minnesota's students with disabilities.

Our keynote speaker on Thursday morning was Kathie Snow. The parent of a child with a disability, Kathie brought another perspective to our work as professional educators. She reminded us that our students are *children* who have disabilities and when we focus on the child rather than the disability we are able to take a more positive, common sense approach to creating useful accommodations and supports for our students. She explained that words are powerful ways of defining a person's value and potential. As a university professor preparing new teachers I require that my students use people-first language in class discussions and written assignments. It is a small step that university students say makes a big difference in their attitudes and actions toward students with disabilities.

Conference participants gained many bright ideas regarding useful practices and strategies from every session they could attend. Highlights include sessions on response

to intervention (RTI) and the Minnesota HOUSSE process. These are areas that we all need to continue focusing on as we work to implement the new regulations for IDEA 2004. Hot off the press, the new regulations were described by the Associate Executive Director of Policy and Communication Services from the national CEC office, Deb Ziegler. Deb helped us become aware of what to expect and reminded us that we are doing great things for students with special education needs regardless of what is or is not mandated. I join her in congratulating and thanking all of you who serve and support students with disabilities.

I also send out my thanks to the conference planning committee: Julie Corcoran, Larry Iwen, Carol Long, Laura Pingry-Kile, Melissa Shaller, and Mary Ellen Wade. It was a pleasure working with this dedicated group throughout the year preceding the 2006 conference. Furthermore, I extend my best wishes to Roberta Kauffman as she gathers a new committee and begins planning for the MNCEC 2007 conference. I look forward to seeing you all there!

**To see the Special Person,  
Teacher and Student award winners,  
please turn the page.**



### **Special Recognition for Minnesota's Student CEC Chapters**

**CONGRATULATIONS ON A STELLAR YEAR!**

Our students have been busy. They held a Fall Retreat, a Student Conference AND they volunteered at the MNCEC/CCBD Special Education Conference. You can also see strategies written by two students on page 7 of this newsletter. Keep up the great work!

# 2006 Special Award Winners!

Congratulations to our awesome award winners! They were honored at the Special Education Conference in Rochester in February. Who do YOU want to nominate for next year? Look for the nomination form in the fall newsletter.



## Special Person

**Dr. David Anderson** is a professor at Bethel University and for over 35 years has worked to improve the lives of children with disabilities and their parents in Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Minnesota, and countries in Africa. Having served numerous leadership positions in CEC including the MNCEC board of directors, he is the founder of Crossing Bridges, a non-profit organization that promotes cooperation between special educators in the United States and Africa.

## Special Teacher

Mike Bakken is an adaptive physical education teacher at Apollo High School in St. Cloud. Mike is noted for his kind, gentle nature and high expectations for students. He has organized two hockey teams for children with special needs through which he teaches the fundamentals of the sport and also sportsmanship and friendship. Mike instills pride in his players and a sense of accomplishment.



## Special Student

Doug La Barr will graduate in June from Saint Peter High School in St. Peter. Doug has learned to overcome and manage many obstacles throughout his school career. Doug highly values education and has learned to advocate for himself. He has earned the respect of the community and is a leader in the classroom. His goal is to attend post secondary education in the medical field possibly becoming an emergency medical technician.

## Letter from the President

*continued from page 2*

my year as president to have supportive officers, involved directors, and strong committees that provided valuable insight and action to make all of these changes happen.

With spring upon us, it is again time for change. I am confident that the good work of MNCEC will continue and I again urge all MNCEC members to “spring into action” and contact board members, committee chairs, and officers and let them know that you would like to be involved.

Positive change happens with groups, teams, and committees and MNCEC is no exception. All MNCEC members are eligible to participate in committee and planning work and as I end my year as president, I would really like to see additional participation and involvement from the membership at large.

The following committees can always use some fresh perspectives, insight, and help: Membership, Conference/Program, Government and Policy, Communications, Student CEC, and Elections. Visit our web page to find contact information for the MNCEC Board of Directors and consider volunteering to work on one of these committees. You’ll find out for yourself how the work of many can bring positive change and results for all.

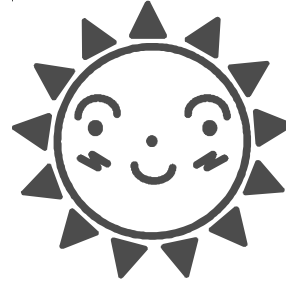
It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as President of the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children and I thank all of you for the opportunity to do so. As I pass the meeting gavel and the responsibilities of the presidency on to Dr. Jeanne Danneker. I wish her much success as she begins her term as President in July.



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# Membership Report

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By Mary Z. McGrath, Membership Chair

## Winners!!

A big thank you to all who helped make the CEC booth at the Bright Ideas, Minnesota CEC/CCBD 2006 Special Education Conference a success. Special mention to those who assisted with the booth: CEC board members Mark Krug, Nancy Recibe, Krista Fisher and Mary Z. McGrath. Those working the booth won by having the ongoing opportunity to meet CEC members and other conference attendees.

Door prize winners from the booth drawing included the following:

- Sonya Foss, Renner — CEC mug
- Joanne Kurtz, Rochester — CEC tee shirt
- Patty Gerard, Eyota — Teacher Federation Credit Union blanket
- Julie Carlblom, St. Peter — CCBD tee shirt
- Kathy Brown, Rogers — mat
- Susan J. Smith, Willmar — CEC mug
- Mary Hanrahan, Rochester — CEC tote bag

Thanks again to all who made the CEC booth a success.

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## Interview with Mary Z. Donovan



*The interviewee is my cousin who lives in Manhattan. Our lives have been parallel in many ways over the years; a new similarity is our membership in CEC!*

*To start, I asked her to share something about her teaching background.*

Mini-resume:

- one year in Ecuador, teaching English as a second language
- three years in New York City, parochial and then private school
- high school math
- third year now in NYC Public Schools, full time special education

Recent New York City special education work includes these settings:

- one year at Choir Academy of Harlem in Harlem

## Involvement Needed!

The Power of **One**.....

**One** of the benefits of joining CEC is meeting other special educators.

**One** of the ways to meet them is to volunteer for CEC projects.

**One** example of that would be working at a CEC membership booth.

**One** way to do that is to call Mary Z. McGrath to arrange to work a booth at an upcoming conference.

Mary can be reached at 952-894-7707 or [info@manyzmcgrath.com](mailto:info@manyzmcgrath.com).

Hoping to hear from you soon!

- 
- two years now at Park and 25, School for the Physical City
  - special education, resource and Math

*Important to me, as membership chair, is why she joined CEC.*

*“The main reason I joined was to educate myself. My special education degree is from 1982, a Masters from the University of Wisconsin and even though I have permanent certification, there is a lot I feel I need to learn or relearn:*

- particularly about writing IEPs, which are legal documents,
- also about meeting with parents, not freaking them out,
- and just about day to day teaching the kids.”

*To add to my cousin’s comments, I would like to mention that when I asked her if she had joined she gave me the affirmative and noted that being a CEC member made her feel more like a professional.*

## The New IDEA

*Continued from page 1*

- IDEA highly qualified requirements make not mention of preschool special educators.
- Requirements regarding highly qualified do not apply to teachers hired by private elementary and secondary schools.

### Least Restrictive Environment Proposed Regulation (SS300.116)

- Language “unless the parent agrees otherwise” found in paragraphs (b)(3) and (c) has been added. CEC has asked this be stricken. The language leaves open parental options of sending their child to a charter, magnet or specialized school without causing a violation of the LRE mandate.

### Private Schools Compliance (Section 612)

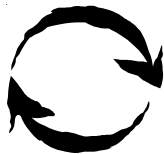
- Issues of placement and funding are being reviewed.

### Personnel Qualifications (Section 612)

- Requirements and funding for the comprehensive system of personnel development are broader as a result of NCLB.
- Availability of qualified related service personnel was noted in the section as an “undue hardship.” CEC finds this a concern that may jeopardize the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) of students, especially in rural areas.

### Participation in Assessments

- CEC supports consideration of growth model.
- Universal Design principles are supported.



### Early Intervening Services

- CEC opposes the use of 15% of IDEA funds for support services to help students not yet identified.

### Evaluation and Reevaluation (Section 614)

- Concerns the native language or other mode of communication used. A loophole “unless it is not feasible to so provide or administer” needs to be addressed.
- Evaluation before change in eligibility is not required before termination due to graduation or exceeding the age limit for FAPE.

### IEP: Content – SS300.320 (a)(5)

- CEC is concerned about the definition of the term “educational environment” rather than “regular classroom.”
- Team attendance: Team members can be excused from all or part of an IEP if parent (in writing) and LEA consent; and if input is submitted in writing prior to IEP meeting.
- Changes to the IEP may be submitted as an amendment if parent permission is given.
- Multi-year IEPs must have measurable goals, document growth and be reviewed at natural transition points.

Individuals having specific questions or comments for Ziegler should contact her at [debz@cec.sped.org](mailto:debz@cec.sped.org).

## MNCEC Board of Directors Election Results

By **Mary Ellen Wade**  
Nominations Chair

### President-Elect:

Roberta Kaufman

### Secretary:

David Nelson

### Treasurer:

Mark Krug

### Re-Elected Board Members:

Brad Benson

Melissa Schaller

### New Board Members:

Sally Baas

Sara Stack

Thank you to everyone who took part in the election and to all candidates who were willing to serve.

A special thanks to two board members who are finishing their terms: Marilyn Hukriede and Krista Fisher. Their commitment and efforts on behalf of MNCEC for the past three years is very much appreciated!

## MN Division of Career Development and Transition

This group is becoming active again. If you would like to be part of it, contact:

Steve Schoenbauer at  
[sschoenbauer@nlsec.k12.mn.us](mailto:sschoenbauer@nlsec.k12.mn.us)

## Generalizing from School to Home

By **Katie McNish, Student**  
**Winona State University**

**A**s a teacher, working with high school students with developmental disabilities can pose many challenges. One of the challenges teachers encounter is whether or not the skills a student has learned at school are applied and generalized in other settings. It is crucial to a student's independent living to learn how to cook, clean, and take care of themselves in their own homes.

Plainview Community High School has developed a program to ensure students generalize learned skills from the classroom to their home. Each Wednesday, senior, Bradley Thiel, rides a bus to his house after lunch and meets a paraprofessional from the school at his home. When he arrives, he gets right to work! Bradley will sweep the floor, vacuum, wash dirty laundry, and cooks for his family. Bradley will cook a main dish and a dessert each week until he can prepare the meal independently. Bradley's mother Deb Thiel said, "He is proud of what he makes. When I come home he shows me everything he has done."

While Bradley is home, the paraprofessional's job is to prompt Bradley and help him complete each task correctly while giving him as much independence as possible. The paraprofessional also records Bradley's progress and mastery of each task as noted in his IEP goals and objectives. Bradley has shown improvements.

When asked about the program and how it has helped Bradley, Deb Thiel said, "He loves it! As far as his independence he wants to help out more and more." I then asked Bradley if he liked going home to cook and clean every Wednesday. He said, "I like it." Bradley not only likes the program but he has become proud of himself. He recently gave a meal he made on Wednesday to a friend because it was his birthday!

This program is ensuring Bradley's successful completion of his IEP goals and objectives as well as the application of skills in a setting other than school. Most importantly, Bradley's proud of himself and the tasks he is capable of completing on his own. This program is ensuring a more independent and happy lifestyle for Bradley and would benefit other students who have difficulty generalizing.



## Assistive Technology in the Classroom

By **Chelsea Mir, Student**  
**Winona State University**

**W**hen working with students with disabilities, a lot of problem-solving is necessary. If a student is currently incapable of a particular task, the teacher must be able to brainstorm possibili-

ties of ways to reach that capability. Assistive technology is a common solution found to help students with disabilities reach these new milestones.

I was given the opportunity to work with an enthusiastic, delightful eighth grade student with cerebral palsy. He lacked fine motor skills, used a wheelchair, and was nonverbal. He was unable write, hold a pencil, turn pages of a book, or any other tasks requiring fine motor skills. At first glance, it is easy to only see all these limitations and not realize all of his capabilities. Due to the assistive technology the student had access to, the tasks which would otherwise be impossible were made into a normal part of his daily routine.

The student was able to communicate his thoughts and needs with a communication board. The keyboard on this was adapted with large keys in order for the student to successfully hit the desired buttons. With this piece of assistive technology, the student was able to demonstrate his personality, communicate with peers, ask questions to his teacher, and express his opinions and ideas. These are all contributing factors in his quality of education and life.

This student was also given access to an electronic page-turner. This encouraged his reading by allowing him to read a book without someone standing over his shoulder to help turn each page.

"It's all about enabling the students to a level of capability that wouldn't otherwise be possible. He may be nonverbal, but with this assistive technology, he is able to interact and engage in classroom activities with

*continued on page 9*

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# MNCCBD Changes Leadership

By **Lonna Moline, President**

I am honored to announce that Laura Pingry-Kile will be taking over as President in September. She is an incredibly resourceful leader and the organization is fortunate to have her taking over the reins. Sara Stack will become the Vice President and Caylah Dargan will become the new Awards and Elections officer.

I have enjoyed being President for the last two years and believe we were able to offer many opportunities to the members. Our recent involvement with the Behavior Institute for Children and Adolescence (BICA) is really exciting. Many of you attended the fall behavior conference. We will be working with BICA again next October for an International behavior conference, which will be held here in the Twin Cities. We will keep you posted.

We have also changed how we take nominations for our awards. We are leaving nominations open year round so that you can send in your information anytime you feel

like recognizing your coworkers for the hard work they do. We understand that we are all so busy that even though we *meant* to send in the nomination, we missed the deadline!



**Council for Children  
with Behavioral Disorders**

Now there is no deadline! All you have to do is send us a paragraph stating why you feel someone deserves one of our honorary awards. If selected, we will contact you for more information. Awards will be presented at one of our conferences or networking events so that the recipient gets public acknowledgement, not to mention the plaque!

We continue to look for your participation and would love to hear from you. You can always visit our website for up to date information, [www.mnccbd.org](http://www.mnccbd.org).

Cheers to a peaceful spring and end to the school year!  
Remember to take care of yourself!

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## **Al Capone Does My Shirts** **Book Review**

*continued from page 11*

Needless to say there are problems, as recounted by Moose, in moving to an island populated by criminals with a sister with autism. However, more importantly to him, there are problems with leaving friends, a neighborhood and school in which he was comfortable and an environment that, while less than perfect for his sister, didn't disrupt his life like his new surroundings were threatening to do. Never mind the fact that there were few options for family members who were autistic.

Up to this point, Moose didn't really have to worry about where his sister went to school or what her outbursts were like because they didn't spill over into his life with his school and friends. However, when the family moved to Alcatraz, his life and community became excruciatingly smaller, and far more complicated.

The story explores the family issues that have to be faced, including the realization that while each of them sees the world from different perspectives, their lives are

inescapably linked. The circumstances that are the catalysts in helping them to eventually find their way through the difficulties they face are intertwined with escapades usually brought on by Moose's new group of friends and their fascination with the world of the gangsters living in close proximity to them, particularly Al Capone.

The author, Gennifer Choldenko, became interested in the fact that we know more about famous prisons and their residents than we do about those who worked there and their families. She became a docent at Alcatraz in order to explore the place, its grim history and chilling stories. She tried to imagine what it would have been like to have lived there as a young person. As a person who herself has a sister with autism, she was especially interested in how the families of employees dealt with the events in their world.

In my world, as a special education teacher, I am interested in novels written for young people that deal with disabilities in a realistic and positive light. [Al Capone Does My Shirts](#) by Gennifer Choldenko is a Junior Library Guild selection, a Children's Book-of-the-Month Club selection and well worth a "must read" designation

# CAN Report



## Legislative Platform 2006

By Bryce Fornes-Bates and Roberta Kaufman  
Co-Chairs MNCEC CAN



For the second year, the Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children Board of Directors and the Children's Action Network (CAN) Committee has published and disseminated a Legislative Platform. The *2006 Legislative Platform* was mailed to all MNCEC members and state Senators and Representatives during the first week of the Minnesota Legislative Session in March.

A legislative platform was first created in 2005 as a guide for CEC members in Minnesota wishing to focus comments and voice continued concern over recent federal and state policy relating to special education and students with disabilities. This year's three platform statements reflect issues that impact special education professionals doing the day-to-day work.

The CAN committee and the Board of Directors of the MN Council of Exceptional Children believe it is important for MNCEC to continue to communicate the significance of special education to state legislators. Legislators tend to listen most attentively to their own constituents. For this reason, we are asking that members contact their State Senator and/or Representative, and express your concerns regarding the support for special education in Minnesota and share the 2006 document with them. By tapping the strength of MNCEC membership throughout the state, the voice and vision of special education in Minnesota will be heard. Together we CAN have a significant impact upon the profession and the children we serve.

More copies can be downloaded at the website, [www.mncec.org](http://www.mncec.org), by clicking on: MNCEC 2006 Legislative Platform (pdf)

Briefly, the three platform statements are:

### **1. MNCEC Supports Adequate Funding for All Education**

MNCEC believes that adequate funding is necessary to ensure ALL Minnesota students receive a high quality, effective education.

- MNCEC supports restoration of the inflationary factor for special education funding.
- MNCEC supports simplification of the special education funding formulas so that they are easily understood, allow districts to accurately predict revenues and are based on current year expenditures.

### **2. MNCEC Supports Reviewing State Special Education Statues and Rules**

MNCEC believes that all Minnesota statues and rules pertaining to the education of children and youth with disabilities that exceed proposed IDEA Part B requirements should be reviewed.

*continued on page 10*

## Assistive Technology

*Continued from page 7*

his peers", said special education teacher Stephanie Cieciva of Elmbrook Middle School in Brookfield, WI. Successfully enabling students always comes along with raising their confidence.

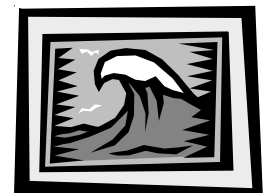
With assistive technology, students can accomplish more and feel better about themselves. Therefore, despite the limitations, teachers should always consider the possibilities of capability and brainstorm how assistive technology can get them there.

## Letter from the Editor

*Continued from back page*

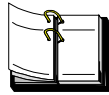
By the time the newsletter gets to our readers, my to do list will have evolved by several generations, the meetings I am dreading today will be long over, the problems I am so concerned about will be resolved. Maybe it's good enough for now to know this phase will pass and I will soon be on a more even keel.

Maybe I should, instead of trying to manage the chaos, just let it sort itself out. Like riding through the rapids, there's the increased speed of the water, the moments of panic as you navigate the boulders, and the calm of the downstream pool. Well, for now I'm shooting the rapids, working hard to keep my craft afloat (or is it my head above water?), and trying to be aware enough to enjoy the ride.

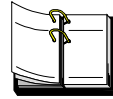


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## Events Calendar



## Events Calendar



## Events Calendar

### MASE Best Practice Conference

May 10-12, 2006

Madden's Lodge, Brainerd, MN

Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

1884 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108

Phone: 651-645-6272 Fax: 651-645-7518

email: [members@mnasa.org](mailto:members@mnasa.org)

### 25<sup>th</sup> National Paraeducator Conference and Annual Minnesota Paraprofessional Conference

May 11-13, 2006

Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Minneapolis, MN

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

### MASE Summer Institute

August 2 - 4, 2006

Ruttger's, Grand Rapids

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

### Annual Fall ECSE Leadership Conference

October 4-6, 2006

Ruttger's Bay Lodge and Resort

Contact Jane Roundtree,

[jane.roundtree@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:jane.roundtree@anoka.k12.mn.us)

Registration will be coming out late summer...Limited on site room availability. Register early.

### MASE Fall Leadership Conference

October 10-13, 2006

Arrowwood, Alexandria

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



## Heads Up For Fall!!

- ✓ **Think about presenting a breakout session at the next MNCEC Special Education conference. Watch the mail for the call for presentations.**
- ✓ **Select someone to nominate for MNCEC recognition — a special education teacher, a parent of a special education student, a friend of special education! Check the fall newsletter for more information.**

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## CAN Report -- Legislative Platform

*Continued from page 9*

- MNCEC supports creation of a stakeholders group to review all Minnesota statutes and rules pertaining to the education of students with disabilities that exceed proposed IDEA Part B requirements.
  - Only those statutes and rules that the stakeholder group, by consensus, believes both enhance the education of Minnesota's children and youth with disabilities AND do not increase the workload of special educators be retained.
3. MNCEC Supports Measures that Improve the Recruitment and Retention of Special Education Professionals
- MNCEC believes that funding must be provided to support the coaching of beginning teachers to ease their entry into the profession and equip them with the skills necessary to remain in the special education field.
  - MNCEC believes that funding must be provided to retain highly qualified teachers and support them to remain in the field of special education.
  - MNCEC believes in expanding reciprocity in recognizing teaching licenses of personnel trained in and licensed by other states.
  - MNCEC believes there must be portability of retirement credits from other states for educators who are willing to move to Minnesota.

# Book Reviews

## Blue Bottle Mystery; An Asperger Adventure

**Author:** K. Hoopman    **Published by:** Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
Philadelphia, PA (2001)



**Book Review by:** Steven Kaatz, MNCEC Board Member  
Professor at Bethel University

An Australian, Kathy Hoopmann, has authored an exciting series of books about Asperger syndrome, all from the perspective of a child with Asperger's syndrome. In addition to the book noted above, the titles include: *Of Mice and Aliens: An Asperger Adventure*, *Haze: An Asperger Novel*, *Lisa and the Lace Maker: An Asperger Adventure*. Reading these books will help children diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, their friends, teachers and parents better understand this unique syndrome.

These books of juvenile fiction are reader friendly. They are inexpensive, are about 100 pages, have wide margins, a larger type font than usual

for juvenile books and their pages are wonderfully uncluttered. (The only illustrations are a few line drawings). In every case, Hoopmann has sympathetically and humorously set forth both the frustrations and the strengths of the child with Asperger's syndrome.

In the *Blue Bottle Mystery*, a boy named Ben finds a strange old bottle buried in his school's yard. He shares its magical powers with his friend. By the end of the book, Ben and family have a better grip on what is causing some of the long lasting problems he has at school and at home.

The following happens in the school-room. (Miss Browning-Lever is Ben's teacher):

"Ben, stop that!" Ben froze. Stop what? He was tilted back in his chair with the front legs off the floor. Slowly he leaned forward and let the legs touch down. Across the room, Miss Browning-Lever still frowned. So that was not why she yelled at him. He sat up straighter and stopped swinging his legs. No, wrong again. . . Why was she always hard to understand? Why was he always in trouble?" (page 9)

I gratefully acknowledge a thesis advisee, Amy Regehr, who introduced me to these amazing books.

*Cautionary notes: There are a few Australia - isms that need decoding. Also, since several of the books deal with the supernatural, some teachers and parents may find the story line objectionable.*

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## Al Capone Does My Shirts

**Author:** Gennifer Choldenko

**Book Review by:** Mary Ellen Wade, MNCEC Board Member  
Special Education Teacher, Jedlicka Middle School, Proctor, MN



Remember the old movies of the 1930s and 40s that told and retold the unlawful yet thrilling, hair-raising stories of the nation's most wanted gangsters? Names like Al Capone and Machine Gun Kelly were among those who eventually wound up in Alcatraz, tried and convicted for the most heinous crimes imaginable. There were hit men, con men, stick-up men, rub-outs, and hide-outs,

even one in Hurley, Wisconsin reportedly used by Al Capone and his gangster friends when they needed to let things "cool down".

This dramatic era, and the current residence of Al Capone and others - Alcatraz - is the background for a novel written for upper elementary and middle school age students, Al Capone Does My Shirts. It is the

story of a family who comes to live on Alcatraz because, due to the hard times of the '30s, the father cannot find work as an electrician and in desperation takes a job as an electrician/guard, mostly guard as it turns out. The story is told from the point of view of the son, "Moose" Flanagan" whose nickname was given to him by his older sister who is autistic.



## Letter from the Editor

by Carol Long



I am writing this at mid-semester and it's the time of year when I'm at my busiest, my list of things to do keeps expanding exponentially, and my favorite word is "done." Perhaps you've experienced this too.

March Madness for me is the feeling I get when I realize I've over extended myself and I'm falling behind, frantically trying to keep up and the harder I try the less efficient I get. I start misinterpreting emails, misreading my calendar, missing the beginnings of meetings, needing to leave before they are through, missing deadlines, I lose things. I get to class and don't have the handouts I need or the wrong notes are in my bag. Feeling tired, overwhelmed, dazed, cross and cranky. Everything takes so much effort. I resent petty annoyances and fantasize about retirement. Spring break becomes a time to catch up on work and not relaxation.

The other day I caught myself wearing my nametag upside down. A couple of weeks ago, I quit exercising, I just didn't have the time. I missed my mother's birthday, just not enough time to focus on what to do for her.

Joan Borysenko, a noted stress management expert, talks about dying and the tombstone will say. "Got it all done. Dead anyway." That's bad enough but my friend Jeanne Danneker's fear is that her tombstone will read "Didn't get it all done. Died anyway."

I'm through with trying to cram as many tasks in as little time as possible. That's a game I gave up a few years ago. Still I need to learn something. Is it how to say no? How to more efficiently manage my time? How to prioritize my tasks? How to delegate or recruit help? How to tough love students? How to separate work life from home life? Probably, it's all those things.

*"... I am grateful for work that has meaning and hopefully makes a difference. I'm thankful to work with people I enjoy and respect. I love work that requires creativity, focus, and, yes, my precious energy."*

I don't have answers to my questions. I do know I am grateful for work that has meaning and hopefully makes a difference. I'm thankful to work with people I enjoy and respect. I love work that requires creativity, focus, and, yes, my precious energy.

*continued on page 9*