



# Spotlight

Newsletter of the Arts Division of the National Association for Gifted Children

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Spring 2005

## NAGC Division Leadership Retreat Summary

By Bess B. Worley II

Members of the leadership from all 14 divisions met with NAGC Board members and national office staff during the weekend of March 11<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. The purpose of this retreat was to provide division leadership with updated information about the proposal review process, information about the convention program and Program Committee, and time to meet with the Divisions Secretary, Rena Subotnik. Representatives from the Arts division included your Chair, Penny Choice, and Bess Worley II (that's me!) as your Vice Chair.

### **UPDATING FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

The weekend began with a special training with the Board of Directors about various governance structures used by nonprofit organizations. The session, titled "21st Century Governance/Board Roles and Responsibilities", was facilitated by Sandy Hughes, a professional in the field of nonprofit organizations who has worked with hundreds of nonprofit boards throughout her career. The session provided useful information to help guide our organization as we adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational environment and to help us maintain our place as a voice for gifted learners, their families, and the educators that work with and for them.

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## Teaching for Artistic Behavior

By Nan Hathaway  
Fine Arts Specialist

Rocky Mountain School for the Gifted and Creative  
Boulder, Colorado

*"(Art is) much better this year because this year there is more freedom. It seems like we have more art supplies to work with this year. Nan is able to support our artwork in greater depth." - "J"- Age 10*

*"I think we have more freedom and it's more enjoyable. This year people can say 'That's a good idea' when you walk out with your artwork, because they know it's a unique, one of a kind, once in the universe idea that has never been made before. It makes you feel kind of proud because they know that it's not someone else idea" -"N"- Age 10*

*"I have a sore throat, and I only came to school because today is art" -"E" - Age 8*

Students at Rocky Mountain School for the Gifted and Creative are experiencing art through fresh eyes, through artist's eyes, eyes that are their own. As the Fine Arts Specialist here, I have adopted the philosophies of "Choice-Based" Art Education, and have transformed the art classroom into an artist's studio. Students this year are enjoying new freedom, greater accessibility to materials and greater responsibility for their own art making.

Creative control has been shifted from teacher to student. In the art room, students are treated as artists and offered authentic choices for responding to their own ideas and interests. As artists, students must generate ideas and make choices about what materials to use to best express their ideas. They set up their own materials and work space and are responsible for cleaning up and putting things away. Students produce plans, overcome obstacles and choose to work alone or with peers. Students are expected to reflect on and discuss their finished work. This is the authentic work of real artists.

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## NAGC Division Leadership Retreat Summary

### **2005 CONVENTION TAKES SHAPE**

Saturday's session focused on the proposal review process and planning the 2005 convention. NAGC President-elect, Joyce VanTassel-Baska, shared the data from the online survey and evaluations of the 2004 convention special sessions and how that data is being used to plan for the 2005 convention. Decisions about special and general sessions will be made based on interests and needs of the primary audience at NAGC conventions and in conjunction with the local planning committee's theme for the convention. Results of the survey indicate that 71% of the attendees are gifted education teachers or program coordinators. The Program committee is being refocused to help coordinate the scheduling of sessions across divisions to consider the targeted audiences of sessions and to ensure a diverse selection of presentations across session times. Division leadership will still be responsible for reviewing and selecting proposals for their division and can make recommendations to the Program committee for the scheduling of division sessions.

### **NEW PROPOSAL PROCESS**

Penny and Bess spent most of Saturday afternoon learning about the new online process to review proposals and working within the new system. Plans are in place to adapt the NAGC proposal evaluation rubric to meet the needs and the mission of the Arts division. This year the division received 31 proposals out of a total 773 submitted (89% were submitted online this year).

### **NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF ROLES**

Sunday's session was devoted to learning more about the role of the national office staff and the Divisions Secretary, Rena Subotnik, and her role as a liaison to the division leadership from the Board. The Divisions Secretary is appointed by the President of NAGC to serve a concurrent term and to facilitate communication with divisions. Nancy Green, Executive Director, also shared information about what was accomplished in the Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, including efforts to honor and continue the work of Mary Frasier relating to diversity in gifted education.

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## CHOICE WORDS

April, 2005

Dear Arts Division Members,

Thank you all for the wonderful proposals you submitted this year. NAGC reports that 773 total proposals (all Divisions together) were submitted – the most since 2002 (Denver). This year is also the last year that paper proposals will be accepted. However, 90% of the proposals were submitted online, and only 10% were paper proposals. So it would seem that NAGC members are ready!

It was very difficult for us to decide on the final recommendations this year for our Division. Due to the structure of the next convention, there were fewer slots for presentations. The final scheduling was done by the Program Committee based on our recommendations and from our efforts to include as many of the arts areas as possible. We wish we could have all of you – but if you weren't chosen this time – please resubmit next year. And if you would consider writing an article for our newsletter – we would love it! We also would like to thank those of you who were willing to present in an alternate format (Marketplace, shared session) because it gave us an opportunity to highlight more of you. The convention in Louisville will be fabulous – thanks to people like you.

One disappointment: We received 0 submissions for dance this year! Dance seems to be in a state of flux in our country but it is part of the changing nature of the audience for dance (from the aristocrats of centuries past to contemporary dance on videos, small and large community dance organizations, and even exercise DVDs focusing on everything from classic ballet to contemporary salsa dancing). Dance is constantly re-inventing itself and people who love dance recognize that "thoughts in motion tend to remain in motion." (Debra Cash). Next year, dear division members, think about how dance meets the needs of gifted kids – and submit a proposal!

In my neck of the woods, the arts seem to be doing well. Walker School, in my community, is the state's top scoring suburban school. In this school parents even raised funds to pay for an extra "artist-in-

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The introduction of new concepts, techniques, skills, art history, contemporary topics and multi-cultural arts are delivered in short sessions at the start of each class and woven into art making sessions. Students are invited to further investigate the new concept or move to various “centers” in the room to pursue their current area of interest. Instruction delivered in this way is relevant, appropriate and welcome and leaves more time for students to work. Centers contain tools and materials as well as instructions, books, original student art and art reproductions. Students have the opportunity to concentrate in one area, becoming “expert” with a particular material or method. They may repeat a process or revisit an idea, in effect working in series to produce a “suite” of related work. Or, students may choose to move between several centers in a single art period, sampling a variety of opportunities. Students are asked to consider ways to reach in a project, finding deeper meaning, greater competence and improved skill. Direct instruction can be further targeted to individuals and small groups in response to current activities. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own efforts and have the opportunity to describe their work to others during class discussions and through written “artist’s statements”.

A choice-based art program empowers students to take greater control of their learning, to find and communicate personal meaning through art and to have the freedom to explore their own ideas and passions. Teaching for artistic behavior in a choice based art program honors and empowers the student as artist, nurturing and protecting qualities that lead toward inquisitive, confident, inventive, tolerant, capable human beings.

Sources:

TAB (Teaching for Artistic Behavior) on:  
<http://knowledgeloop.org/tab/index.jsp>

*The Case for Constructivist Classrooms* –Jacqueline Grennon Brooks, Martin G Brooks

*The Art of Teaching Art to Children* - Nancy Beal

*No More Second Hand Art: Awakening the Artist Within*  
– Peter London

*Encouraging Creativity in Art Lessons* – George Szekely

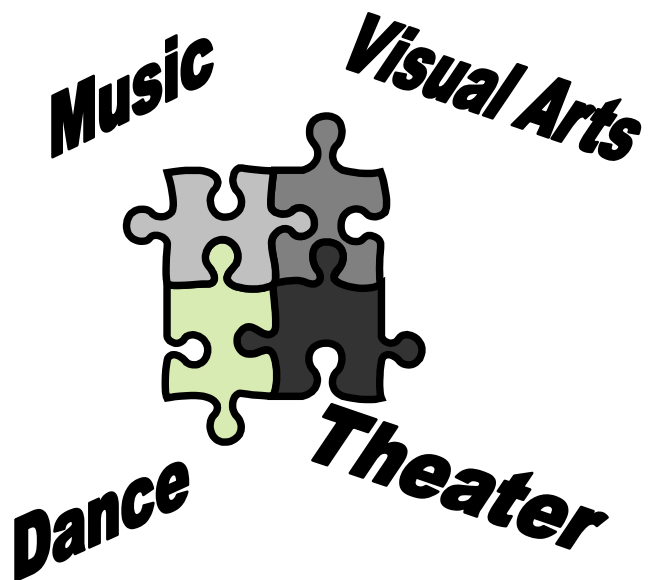
*Understanding Children’s Art for Better Teaching* –  
Betty Lark-Horovitz, Hilda Present Lewis, Mark Lucca

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### **CHANGES TO THE 2005 CONVENTION SCHEDULE**

Finally, some changes have been made to the 2005 convention schedule. The annual Business Meeting and Awards Assembly is scheduled for Friday evening. An opening General Session is now scheduled for Thursday evening to serve as an opportunity for those arriving for the beginning of the convention to meet-up with pre-convention attendees and to kick-off the regular convention sessions. There will also be an Exhibit Hall Grand Opening (with food!) after the opening general session. The same structure will be used for lunch on Friday and Saturday, incorporating division business meetings and time to visit the exhibit hall. A general session will also be used to close the convention on Sunday morning. Like all the divisions, the Arts membership has decreased, specifically from 179 in 2002 and 155 in 2003 to 124 in 2004, representing about 2% of overall convention attendance. We hope that the new energy brought by a renewal of focus will encourage more members to join divisions and become active in ways to support the missions of the division and the overall organization.

LATE BREAKING NEWS!!!! Convention information is available at [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org). We look forward to seeing you there!



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residence” – a puppeteer- on top of the music and art teacher. Teachers and administrators work hard to link art to the core subjects. When fourth graders study flowers, for example, the teacher links the study of painter Georgia O’Keefe to their work. They write poetry; they create music, they incorporate creative dramatics and movement into the curriculum. And there is an effort to provide a whole continuum of opportunities for children – including the gifted.

Our local area even has a professional Shakespeare Festival that is continually being cited for Jefferson Awards (the Chicago professional theatre awards). This summer, I will be teaching acting to Middle School and High School kids and giving them exposure to authentic Shakespeare training with the artistic director of the company. What a wonderful opportunity for kids to develop their love of theater.

I know that many districts throughout the country are eliminating school programs in the arts due to financial difficulties and high stakes testing. And those who continue to provide services may limit classes to limited scheduling in visual art and/or general music. But finding and developing gifts in the arts is a crucial need for our country and we must keep up the commitment for our kids: In dance, drama, art AND music.

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***From music and dance to painting and sculpting, the arts allow us to explore new worlds and to view life from another perspective. They also encourage individuals to sharpen their skills and abilities and to nurture their imagination and intellect. As a Nation, we must continue to recognize the importance of the arts in building strong and vibrant communities.***

***George W. Bush  
July 28, 2001***



## From the Editor

Art teachers show up in the craziest places. During this school year I became a mentor for my son’s high school FIRST Robotics team. Generally speaking this activity attracts the hard core engineer types, number crunchers, and strategic planners. But at one of the competitions I got into a conversation with a coach from a very successful team. She was a high school art teacher who found that her creativity and problem solving skills were also needed to help a group of young adults in their quest to build a winning robot. As it turns out, artists and engineers **don’t** live in separate universes! This brings me to my point. Although those of us who work in art education may sometimes feel underappreciated I see hope that society does value our work. More and more people are discovering that the thought processes so important to the painter, dancer, and musician are vital to success in any field of endeavor. Penny Choice shares a similar message in her column this time.

The Wallace Foundation recently released a report by the RAND Corporation titled “Gifts of the Muse – Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts.” In it the researchers outline the cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral, health, community/social, and economic benefits the arts bestow on society. You can find the report at <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/WF/>

In this issue of Spotlight you will see a quotation from President Bush. It is from an address he made to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Americans for the Arts. You can find the complete address and more at [http://www.americansforthearts.org/public\\_awareness/](http://www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/)

Perhaps sites like these will give you hope and effective ammunition if you must defend your program. Thankfully, two years ago, when my school district had to make huge cuts due to a drop in state funding they did not even publicly discuss cutting the art and music programs. I think they understood that our community would find that unacceptable.

If you too have messages of hope please let us know. We’ll print them in future issues of Spotlight.

Hoping to hear from you soon,  
Karen Engelkenjohn

*Karen Engelkenjohn is a teacher of K – 6 gifted students in the Hazelwood, Missouri School District. . She incorporates fine art into most of her classes.*



## Computer Resources for Arts

Division members:

I recently received my monthly “Marco-Gram” (April) from this wonderful site for teacher lesson ideas. This month’s focus is on Leonardo da Vinci and the Spirit of Invention. I have mentioned this site in past newsletters, yet this organization is one that bears repeating. If you go to [www.marcopolo-education.org](http://www.marcopolo-education.org) you will find lessons in science, math, the humanities and the arts that are fabulous. First, they are tried and tested lessons and units. Second, they provide challenges for every grade level and in all content areas. This means they are also perfect for differentiation – and are appropriate for gifted students.

Sign up for a monthly marcogram and they will send you examples of lessons on many different topics. This month’s feature focused on invention through the lens of da Vinci. Resources and lesson ideas are highlighted for K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Here is an excerpt from the lessons:

“The spirit of invention also extends to such diverse topics as mathematics and art. Combining his skills as a mathematician and artist, Leonardo da Vinci developed the chiaroscuro technique which uses light and shadow to give flat paintings the illusion of dimension.”

Following this are examples of this technique appropriate for various grade/readiness levels and featured lessons connected to various content areas.

The MarcoPolo Consortium includes top educational links and organizations. For the Arts, the Kennedy Center organization, ArtsEdge, provides incredible connections.

Take the time today to go to [www.marcopolo-education.org](http://www.marcopolo-education.org) and explore this wonderful site for yourself.

By Penny Choice

Do you have a favorite Internet site for the arts? Email Penny at [pennychoice@comcast.net](mailto:pennychoice@comcast.net) and we’ll put it in the next Newsletter.

## Arts Division

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR  
GIFTED CHILDREN

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For more information,  
Visit the NAGC website:  
<http://www.nagc.org>

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JOIN US FOR THE 2005  
CONVENTION IN LOUISVILLE, KY  
NOVEMBER 9TH - 13TH



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To do less, is to miss the point of education: To develop habits of mind for a lifetime through critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and perseverance. The Arts accomplish this task.

My best to you,  
Penny Choice  
Chair, Arts Division  
NAGC

“I am interested in ideas, not merely in visual products.”

Marcel Duchamp

“How important are the visual arts in our society? I feel strongly that the visual arts are of vast and incalculable importance. Of course I could be prejudiced. I am a visual art.”

Kermit the Frog, Muppet