

# CEA SPRING NEWSLETTER

## MAY, 2007

*The mission of the Christian Educators Association is to inspire and support Christian educators and encourage community by providing opportunities for spiritual and professional growth based on God's Word.*

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

### ➤ **Letter From the CEA President**

Homecoming! After two years away with regional conventions and MANS, we are “coming home” this year to South Bend. We have been planning a great mix of old and new as you will see by this newsletter. We expect it will be a great convention!

Over the past year your CEA leadership group has examined the unique role of CEA in helping to advance Christian education. At our convention we have a special opportunity to join together to learn, to worship, and to encourage each other. As a leadership group we have pondered the question: How could our convention help to focus our efforts on what makes our schools *distinctively Christian*? How could we, as a group of educators unified through Christ, better help our schools meet their missions and share our ideas/learning together? We recognize that we must both equip our minds and encourage our hearts so that we can better teach our students and meet the missions of our schools.

- **Equipping our minds:**

We live in a time of exponential knowledge growth – so what are the most important things to focus on with our students? One of our chief desires as Christian educators is to show our students how faith and learning are integrated - a core distinctive of Christian education. Our goal must be to do this well and to share the best ways to do this. Toward that end we have put together a new “Focus Sectional” concept. This year we will begin with the communication arts – reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing. What a great opportunity we will have to learn from two colleagues who have pondered this deeply – Gary Schmidt and James Schaap. But we don’t expect them to have all the answers – please come ready to share with colleagues your best ideas to integrate faith and learning in the area of communication arts.

- Encouraging our hearts:  
Someone has said, “For the first time in history we are preparing students for a future that we cannot clearly describe.” Yet as Christian educators we know who holds our future and that we belong to a faithful and loving God. We need to be reminded of that faithfulness from those around us who have walked by faith. What are the stories of God’s work among us? Have your heart encouraged as you hear the stories of God’s faithfulness shared by others in special “Celebration” sectionals.
- We are pleased to announce that Brenda Vander Ploeg was hired this past summer as Executive Secretary. She is a former teacher at Zeeland Christian with a master’s degree in gifted and talented (comes in handy for working with CEA teachers!) Brenda has a passion for Christian education and is highly qualified for the task with strong organizational and communication skills, attention to detail, and a good sense of humor. She has been doing an outstanding job in taking over responsibilities from Sue Lucas. A special thanks to both of them for their extra efforts in helping everything to run smoothly!
- Our entire CEA leadership group reviewed the recent MANS convention participation in light of a decision needing to be made about attending future conventions. We expressed in a letter to the MANS board our desire that they address our concerns about the convention maintaining a strong Christian focus, its overall cost, and lack of opportunities to interact between Catholic, Lutheran, and CSI schools. We also recognized that this convention is a very significant way for us to unite with and encourage others in Christian education. We have given a “qualified yes” to attending the MANS 2012 convention at this time.
- Thanks to those of you who have recently accepted nomination for election to CEA leadership group – we appreciate your willingness to serve in this way.
- And finally, please give a word of appreciation to anyone from your school who is currently serving on Convention Planning, Professional Standards, or Governing Board – they are working hard and doing a great job on your behalf!

Working together with you in His kingdom,  
Dan Beerens

**CEA dues for the 2007 - 2008 school year will be \$75.00.**

➤ **Future CEA Convention Dates**

- 2008 – October 23 & 24 – South Bend, Indiana
- 2009 – October 22 & 23 – South Bend, Indiana

➤ **Convention Planning Committee Report**

CEA Planning Committee is busy at work preparing for our “homecoming” after a few years apart to *Celebrate the Story*. We are pleased to announce that Dr. Tony Campolo will present our keynote address in 2007. We are premiering two new sectional offerings. We are offering a Focus Sectional which will allow us time to talk about how we integrate our faith in curriculum. This year we will be concentrating on language arts, reading and writing. We are excited to announce that James Schaap will be leading and encouraging grade six through twelve teachers and Gary Schmidt will be guiding and inspiring teachers in grades Pre-K through five. The Focus Sectional gives a unique opportunity to discuss what we do best as Christian Educators. We have reserved a large space so there is room for you!

As we *Celebrate the Story* this year, we reflect back on *Telling the Story*, *The Author of the Story* and *Living Out the Story*. We are thankful for God’s goodness in our lives. Come and hear the stories of God’s love and faithfulness in our new Celebration Sectionals. These Celebration Sectionals allow us to take joy and give praise in and through the lives of others who have experienced God in many unique ways. You may enjoy a Celebration Sectional in each of the time slots at the upcoming convention. Come and be inspired!

CEA is an organization that encourages us to remember who we are. We are not merely individual teachers; we are more than just individual schools. We are teachers and administrators joined together across many miles to share God’s world through textbooks, conversations and life experiences with our students and with each other.

Come- get ready to worship, fellowship and praise our wonderful God!

See you in South Bend!

### ➤ **Professional Standards Committee Report**

Many of you may ask: “What is the Professional Standards Committee (PSC)?” It’s a committee that is here to serve fellow members of CEA by acting as a sounding board for concerns that may arise and by recognizing members who deserve recognition.

This past year we have completed revising the CEA handbook that addresses issues that may be of concern to CEA members and their schools. Some of these issues are teacher responsibilities, class sizes, personnel relations between teacher, administrators and boards, and many others. A copy of the handbook is available on the CEA website. The committee is also responsible for maintaining the contents of the website with input from the other committees.

It is also our privilege to honor CEA members who have reached 25 and 35 years of service in Christian Education. This past year at the MANS convention we honored 3 teachers for 25 years of service and 4 teachers for 35 years of service at our House of Delegates meeting in Grand Rapids. This coming convention in South Bend we are looking forward to honoring many more at our mass meetings.

### ➤ **New items at the 2007 Convention**

- **Focus Sectionals** – We are excited to offer this brand new type of sectional that could only occur at a Christian Educators Convention. This sectional will give us a chance to focus in on the ways we integrate our faith into the subject area of reading and writing. We have two tremendous speakers, James Schaap and Gary Schmidt, coming to lead off the focus sectional, and then you will have a chance to participate in small group discussions. You can share an idea that really helps you mix Christ into language arts, and learn from the other teachers around you. Christ is Lord of all and in all and we celebrate the opportunity to teach from that perspective in our Christian schools. We have a large space reserved for you to attend this exciting new sectional!
  
- **Celebration Sectionals** – The theme of the 2007 convention is *Celebrating the Story*. This is the last of our ‘story themes,’ the past three being: *I Love to Tell the Story*, *The Author of the Story* and *Living Out the Story*. We are excited to offer a *Celebration Sectional* in each time slot where you can hear speakers from many different walks of life celebrate what Christ has done in their life!
  
- **CEA Book Club** – Something new at convention this year will be the CEA Book Club. In the fall we will announce which book will be chosen and then one of the sectionals at the convention will be a book club discussion of that book. Look for the title of the book and for the book club sectional!