

FingerPoints

APRIL 2006 EDITION

E-Newsletter for *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously*

Happy April Fool's Day (Okay, I know this is late.)

Sorry, for the late e-newsletter. However I have a note from my mom which says that the dog ate the first version, my little sister turned the second version in as her college thesis and the third version was stolen by pirates. Actually, I have been in Texas at the NAESP conference, but the main reason this is late is because we have had some beautiful weather where I live and I

have spent a lot of time playing outside with my son. (Can someone tell me how a 6 year old, who hasn't built any muscles can throw a ball for two straight hours and the 42 year old father can't lift his arm the next morning?) Anyway, don't forget to get out this spring and Practice PHWH.

Scott Endres

The Finger of the Month - #1 Laughter is Good

For whatever reason, this seems a good time to remember that Laughter Is Good. Maybe it is because this time of year gets so busy or maybe its because I have noticed that the stress seems to be getting to everyone, but now seems to be a good time to remind us about the power of laughter.

First, at the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH) conference I attended in February one of the keynote speakers was Dr. Paul McGhee. Dr. McGhee received his PhD in developmental psychology in 1968 and soon after he became one of the pioneers of humor research. Since that time he has been one of the leaders in research on the effects of humor on the human body.

Dr. McGhee covered several topics during his address, including the research that shows that the effects of laughter have a similar effect on the brain as does cocaine (and some other things.) However the most interesting part of his speech was the findings about humor and cardiac heart disease (CHD).

If you don't know, CHD is the number one cause of death in the US (1 in 5). However, 50% of CHD patients do not show the conventional risk factors, so we need to look at different reasons for CHD and different methods to treat them. One of those is humor. Dr. McGhee presented that there is a large body of research that shows that persistent negative emotion is connected to CHD., through anger and hostility elevating heart rate and blood pressure. Additionally, it is humor has shown to be very effective in "undoing" the cardiovascular damage. (Dr. McGhee's presentation was very medically detailed. If you are interested in the specifics, you can check out his work at www.laughterremedy.com.)

Yes, as I say in my workshops, research isn't very exciting to talk about, but the results sure are exciting. Dr. McGhee shows us that laughter not only makes us feel good, but can actually help us live longer. If that doesn't remind us that laughter is good, I don't know what will.

Is This Your First Time?

Getting a FingerPoints E-newsletter, that is.

If this is your first issue of FingerPoints, feel free to check out past issues at www.paperwadideas.com . Click on the FingerPoints link and feel free to download the 2006 editions of the newsletter. Once you've downloaded them , it is your job to pass them on your friends.

Getting a Laugh Out of Your NCAA Bracket

I don't know about you, but I got several laughs out of my NCAA bracket. George Mason? GEORGE MASON!?!? For those of you who don't follow college basketball, George Mason was not our 7th president, but instead a little basketball team who made it the Final Four. The George Mason team was, by most accounts, about the 40th best team in the country, but they beat some of the top teams in the country, including the number one team, to make a run to be one of the final four teams in the tournament.

How did they do this? They laughed. (Well, they also played some really good basketball.) The coach of George Mason is Jim Larranaga, who has been a college basketball coach for over 30 years. He is what you would call a traditional, discipline based coach. He demands his players go to class and that they play the game in a respectful way. In fact, he held out one of his best players from the first round of the tournament, because he didn't like the way the player had acted during a previous game. However, there is another side of Coach Larranaga and it can be summed up in the following quote. "Nobody plays as well as they can play when they're all stressed out."

If you think about how a basketball practice before a major national tournament game should end, you usually think of things like running hard, fighting to the end, or something about TEAM. How does Jim Larranaga end these practices? The 56 year old coach plays baseball on the basketball floor, with his team. They finish every practice by playing, but not playing basketball, but instead playing baseball to have fun. In other words, he understands that laughter is good and he was teaching his players how to Practice PHWH.

So the next time you think you have to work a team or group harder to get the best out of them, think about this. Have you ever coached a team to the Final Four? I know I haven't, so I'm going to follow the lead of Jim Larranaga and his George Mason Patriots, and play.

Some Really Bad Teacher Jokes and Quotes

Knowledge is power, but power corrupts and corruption is a crime and crime doesn't pay, so if you keep studying, you'll go broke.

Laugh, and the class laughs with you, but you get detention alone.

Q: What are the small rivers that run into the Nile?

A: Juve-Niles

Q: Why is Alabama the smartest state?

A: Because it has four A's and a B

Parent: Why does your test have a big zero at the top of it?

Student: It's not a zero. My teacher ran out of stars, so she put a moon on it.

Our football team recently had to purchase new uniforms. The athletic store said they would sell our team the new uniforms but they would have to pay 33 1/3% as a down payment. The coach turned down the offer because he said they always passed on a third down.

HAVE A JOKE OR A FUNNY STORY FROM TEACHING?

SEND IT TO FINGERPOINTS@PAPERWADIDEAS.COM AND I'LL SHARE IT IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE.

© 2006 PaperWad Ideas

These are the Days of Our Lives

April is Kite Month? What a surprise. However, there are some great ones you will want to enjoy. Remember these are real holidays celebrated by someone, somewhere. So just celebrate!

Month

Fresh Florida Tomatoes Month
Straw Hat Month

Holy Humor Month
International Twit Month

Weeks

1-7 Laugh at Work Week
17-23 Egg Salad Week
17-23 Cowboy Poetry Week
23-29 National Karaoke Week
23-29 Innovation Week
23-30 Sky Awareness Week
24-30 National Scoop the Poop Week
24-30 National TV Turn-off Week

Days

1 April Fool's Day
1 National Fun Day
1 Sorry Charlie Day
3 Tweed Day
5 Stories Day
5 Thank You School Librarian day
6 National Fun at Work Day
6 Tartan Day
7 No Housework Day
8 Trading Cards for Grown-ups Day
10 Commodore Perry Day
12 Licorice Day
12 Walk on Your Wild Side Day

13 International Plant Appreciation Day
14 International Moment of Laughter
15 Take a Wild Guess Day
15 That Sucks Day
17 Blah! Blah! Blah! Day
18 National Stress Awareness Day
18 National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day
18 Pet Owner Independence Day
21 Kindergarten Day
21 National Chocolate-covered Cashews Day
22 National Jelly Bean Day
26 National Hug an Australian Day
27 Mule Day

Looking for a Great Way to Start Next Year?

Thanks to the great crowds we had recently at education conferences in Kentucky and Texas, dates for the beginning of the next school year are filling up fast. If you would like to start the year with a keynote address or workshop, which will both inspire your staff and remind you of the reasons we got in to teaching, contact *PaperWad Ideas* now to schedule *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously!*

If you already have the beginning of the year covered, consider scheduling *Teaching Is...* during the year, when the stress level is really high. Also don't forget that *PaperWad Ideas* provides unique education professional development, which combines the best of current educational research with a truly entertaining presentation. To find out more about the details, see the information below.