

# FingerPoints

APRIL 2007 EDITION

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

## It's New to You

Welcome to April, and welcome to Spring. I love this time of year. It is a time when everything seems new. Everything that was bad has a chance to be good again. It is appropriate that the new baseball season starts on April 1st this year, because it is that one day that every fan can say that this is the year we are going to win it all. (Well, everyone but the Cubs.)

As I have thinking about the theme for this newsletter, it seemed obvious to me that the them should be about things that are new, and it is. However, as I got closer to the time to write this, I started to think about the past, also. Maybe it had to do with some old pictures I found of myself (these will not be shown on the internet) or the fact the my 7 year old son started listening to old Rush songs (I wonder how he heard those?), but I started realizing that the past can really effect everything new.

Let me give you an example. Recently, t a teacher I know, because of illness, had some memory loss. Before the loss, he was what I would describe as an angry teacher. He wasn't angry at the students, but just teaching in general (sound familiar?). The bad part about this was that it really had a negative affect on her

teaching.

However, after he came back to work after his illness, he was a different person. Because of the memory loss, he had forgotten all those frustrations he had previously and that got in his way of teaching. The teacher I saw after his illness was happy and this made a huge difference with his students. It was a joy to see him work with students, and this was a huge change.

This reminds me of the great quote from the baseball pitcher Satchel Paige, "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were." But, let's change it. How mad would you be if you didn't know how mad you were? If we are going to get into the spirit of Spring and be new again, we have to let go of the old things of the past. Now this isn't easy, but as with most things, admitting that we have to do this is the first step. If you are like me, you take this first step on a daily basis. But the key is to keep taking that first step until it holds and then we can jump into Spring. Then we can jump into something new.

Have a Good Day,  
Scott Endres

## The Finger of the Month - #5 Laugh at the World Around You

I'm sure some of you are asking, why would I want to try something new in April. I'm too tired. My question is, why not? Are your students wearing thin and bored with the routine? Are you? (I know I am.) That is why now is one of the best times to try something new.

The question is, what to try new. Well how about a couple of little things I have seen as I have traveled around the country. Do students say silly things in your classroom? Have you ever thought "I should write this down?" Well, do it. Be like the teacher I talked to in North Carolina who writes down all the funny things students say during the school year, and at the end of the year class awards program she gives out prizes for the silly comments and actions.

Here is another simple idea. Do you have problems with students not having something to write with in class? And if you lend them a pencil, do you have a hard time getting them back? Well, be like the teacher in Indiana who keeps a collection of the biggest, most hideous pens/pencils at her desk for students to use. This gives them a writing utensil, and in most cases it is not one they will want to take with them (especially the guys.) However, if they do take , they should be very easy to track down.

Just remember, to try something new, you only need to look at the world around you. For more ideas, go to [www.paperwadieas.com/education](http://www.paperwadieas.com/education) and click on the presentation hand-outs on the left side of the page.



## Don't Be Afraid to Be Stupid

Stupid is community. Let me explain. I just got back from my son's school, where they had a March Madness assembly. Along with giving out some awards, they also played a game called Knock Out, where all the staff shot baskets to try to win for their class. What made this stupid was that no one, and I mean no one, had any basketball talent. However, as I watched the students I could see, as I have seen dozens of times before, that this was a unifying event for the students. It tapped into the students' energy and allowed them to be a part of the school community.

I have been stupid about events like this for years. Whether it was the silly olympics that I organized for years at a school, where the entire staff made fools of ourselves, or whether it was at the high school where I was told that it was stupid to try to get students involved in a huge food drive (35,000 cans by the way), I have understood that the one thing in common with every student is that they want to belong. They want to be a part of a community and if we don't provide it for them, they will find it somewhere, like with gangs.

So, if you want to give your students a community to belong to, do something stupid.

## Random New Things on the Internet

In keeping with the NEW theme, I am happy to introduce several new things on the PaperWad Ideas website ([www.paperwadideas.com](http://www.paperwadideas.com)).

First, there are new workshops on the education page, including the debut of Don't Be Afraid... . In it participants will learn how to overcome other people's beliefs of what a teacher should be and how to concentrate on what a teacher needs to be.

Second, there is a new game on the website. If you have been stuck in a boring PD workshop, and found yourself trying to stay awake by counting the little dots in the ceiling tiles, then I have your solution. PD Bingo. Go to the website and look for the PD Bingo link, then you can download the latest, and best way, to pass your time in boring PD.

(NOTE: I won't be offended if you play it during one of my sessions.)

Finally, the most important addition to the website is..... the BBQ page. No, it doesn't have anything to do with education, but that's okay. We can take a break every once in a while. As I have had the pleasure of traveling around the country, I have also had the luxury of trying a lot of really good barbecue. I have listed the ones I remember, and will continue to update the list as I try new ones. However, if you would like to be an official PW BBQ Correspondent, go to the BBQ page and send me your three line review of your favorite place. Sorry, there is no pay, but maybe you could write the meal off on your taxes.

## Need a New Look for Your Professional Development?

It is time to start planning for next year's professional development. If you would like something new and different, take a look at PaperWad Ideas. What are PaperWad Ideas? Those are the ideas you have after you throw the first boring ones away. That is what we do. We start with the basic professional development workshop and then keep adjusting it until get it to be the best. Whether it is one of our workshops that we have presented across the country, or one we develop specifically for you, we promise we will provide a unique, effective, entertaining and motivating workshop.

**If you are interested in having PaperWad Ideas come to your school, contact us at 502.420.8584 or by email at [pwi@paperwadideas.com](mailto:pwi@paperwadideas.com).**

HAVE A JOKE OR A FUNNY STORY FROM TEACHING?

SEND IT TO [FINGERPOINTS@PAPERWADIDEAS.COM](mailto:FINGERPOINTS@PAPERWADIDEAS.COM) AND I'LL SHARE IT IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE.

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## These are the Days of Our Lives

Well, I have been putting this off for several months, but I have finally made the jump to a four page e-newsletter. I haven't wanted to make the jump, mainly because I knew that would mean I would have more space to fill, and sometimes that can be tough. However, April seemed like a good month to do it for two reason. One is because of the theme to try something new, and two, because there are so many celebrations this month. This way I can make sure to include everything, including High Five Day and National Scoop the Poop Week.

Remember these are real holidays celebrated by someone, somewhere. So just celebrate!

### Month

Celebrate Diversity Month	Community Spirit Month
Emotional Overeating Awareness Month	Fresh Florida Tomatoes Month
Grange Month	Injury Prevention Month
International Daffynitions Month	International Twit Award Month
Jazz Appreciation Month	Keep America Beautiful Month
Learn Thai Month	National Car Care Month
National Child Abuse Prevention Month	National Decorating Month
NATIONAL HUMOR MONTH	National Kite Month
National Knuckles Down Month	National Pecan Month
National Pet First Aid Awareness Month	National Poetry Month
National Youth Sports Safety Month	Physical Awareness Month
School Library Media Month	Straw Hat Month
Stress Awareness Month	Southern Belles Month
Workplace Conflict Awareness Month	

### Weeks

1-7 LAUGH AT WORK WEEK	1-7 National Blue Ribbon Week
2-8 National Public Health Week	8-14 National Garden Week
9-15 Egg Salad Week	9-15 National Women's Nutrition Week
9-15 Pan American Week	15-21 National Coin Week
15-21 Cowboy Poetry Week	15-21 National Library Week
15-21 National Volunteer Week	16-20 Consumer Awareness Week
16-21 Heritage Week	16-22 National Inspirational News Week
16-22 Young People's Poetry Week	18-22 International Whistler's Week
20-29 National Dance Week	21-29 National Wildlife Week
21-23 National Youth Service Days	22-28 National Spoken Word Week
22-28 Administrative Professionals Week	22-28 Innovation Week
22-28 National Karaoke Week	22-28 National Park Week
22-28 Sky Awareness Week	22-28 Week of the Young Child
23-28 Fish Fry Week	23-27 National Playground Safety Week
23-29 National TV Turn-off Week	24-30 National Scoop the Poop Week
28-30 Safe Kids Week	

## These are the Days of Our Lives - Part 2

Obviously, I enjoy a good laugh as much as anybody, but I'll have to admit that being a middle school teacher, I'm happy that April Fool's Day is on Sunday this year. It'll just make the day a little calmer. Hope you enjoy these days of our lives.

### Days

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|---|---|
| 1 April Fool's Day                      | 1 All Fools Day                             |
| 1 Boomer Bonus Day                      | 1 National Fun Day                          |
| 1 Sorry Charlie Day                     | 2 International Children's Book Day         |
| 3 Pony Express Day                      | 3 Tweed Day                                 |
| 4 Paraprofessional Appreciation Day     | 5 NATIONAL FUN AT WORK DAY                  |
| 6 Drowsy Driver Awareness Day           | 6 Tartan Day                                |
| 6 Teflon Day                            | 6 World Marbles Day                         |
| 7 Empowered Women Entrepreneurs Day     | 7 National Birding Day                      |
| 7 National Love Our Children Day        | 7 No Housework Day                          |
| 7 World Health Day                      | 8 Trading Cards for Grown-ups Day           |
| 9 Jenkins Ear Day                       | 9 National Cherish An Antique Day           |
| 10 Commodore Perry Day                  | 10 National Siblings Day                    |
| 11 Barbershop Quartet Day               | 11 Poetry and the Creative Mind Day         |
| 12 National D.A.R.E. Day                | 12 Licorice Day                             |
| 12 Mule Day                             | 12 Walk on Your Wild Side Day               |
| 13 Blame Someone Else Day               | 13 International Plant Appreciation Day     |
| 13 Thomas Jefferson Day                 | 14 Pan American Day                         |
| 14 Tangible Karma Day                   | 15 Take a Wild Guess Day                    |
| 15 That Sucks Day                       | 15 Equal Pay Day                            |
| 15 Husband Appreciation Day             | 16 Tax Day (Sorry, had to remind you.)      |
| 16 International Moment of Laughter Day | 17 Blah! Blah! Blah! Day                    |
| 17 Ellis Island Family History Day      | 17 Ford Mustang Day                         |
| 17 National Stress Awareness Day        | 17 National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day   |
| 18 Pet Owners Independence Day          | 18 Third World Day                          |
| 19 High Five Day                        | 19 John Parker Day                          |
| 21 Astronomy Day                        | 21 Auctioneer's Day                         |
| 21 Kindergarten Day                     | 21 National Chocolate Covered Cashews Day   |
| 21 World Cow Chip Day                   | 22 Earth Day                                |
| 22 National Jelly Bean Day              | 24 National Teach Your Children to Save Day |
| 25 Administrative Professionals Day     | 26 Hug an Australian Day                    |
| 26 Richter Scale Day                    | 26 Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day  |
| 27 Arbor Day                            | 27 Mantanzas Mule Day                       |
| 27 National Hairball Awareness Day      | 28 Rebuilding Day                           |
| 28 Sense of Smell Day                   | 28 World Tai Chi & Qigong Day               |
| 29 National Dance Day                   | 30 Hairstylist Appreciation Day             |
| 30 International Walk Day               | 30 International Honesty Day                |
| 30 Spank Out Day                        | 30 Walpurgis Day                            |