

# FingerPoints

SEPTEMBER 2006 EDITION

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

## Welcome Back, to that Same Old Place that You Laughed About

Some of you may not remember the above line from the 1976 #1 hit by John Sebastian. (And those of us that do remember, don't want to be reminded that you weren't alive then.) It is from the show *Welcome Back, Kotter* (aka as the show where John Travolta got his start.) It was a show about a former student who comes back, against his better judgement, to his old school to teach.

In a way, this is how we feel sometimes about coming back, it is against our will. We have enjoyed our summer. We have enjoyed having a life outside of the school and we are a little hesitant about coming back. However, remember the end of the theme .

*Who'd have thought they'd lead ya  
(Who'd have thought they'd lead ya)  
Back here where we need ya  
(Here where we need ya)*

*Welcome back, welcome back,  
Welcome back, welcome back.*

Welcome Back!  
Scott Endres

## The Finger of the Month - #1 Laughter Is Good

The start of the year seems a good time to remind everyone that *Laughter Is Good*. Sure it sounds simple, laughter is good. But just because it sounds simple, doesn't mean it is any less important. Laughter is good and it is something we need in our teaching and our lives.

First, laughter in our teaching. As much as some of us older teachers don't want to admit it, teaching isn't quite the same as it was when we started. We have a different clientele then we used to have. Now we can whine about it, or we can do something about it, and change the way we teach. One of those changes is the use of laughter. Remember, laughter is good for our classroom in two major ways. First, it has been shown that laughter in classroom helps students learn. It does this through greater interest in the class, and increased comprehension through promoting cooperative learning and higher level thinking,. Second, laughter helps you manage your classroom through helping students relax in the classroom and soothing differences between them and others.

However, the most important way that laughter is good for teachers is through the health benefits. The medical research on laughter has now been going on for over 30 years and there is no question about it. Laughter, real belly laughter, makes a person healthier. We could through the details and research which back it up, but let's keep it simple. Laughter is good for your health. So use it a lot this year. Set aside some time (at least 5-10 minutes) every day where your goal is to laugh out loud. Yeah, it sounds stupid to do, but death sounds even more stupid.

## 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](http://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.

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## Laughter 4 Life Challenge

The beginning of the school year is a great time to start something new. We are energized, full of new ideas, and full of hope that this year we can make an even bigger difference. Those ideas, especially that we can truly make a difference, and the health benefits of laughter mentioned in the Finger of the Month, are reasons behind the **Laughter 4 Life Challenge**.

The Laughter 4 Life Challenge is not a challenge for you, but for me. My goal is to put either a Laughter 4 Life Lounge or Laughter 4 Life Cart in every hospital in North America. What is a laughter lounge or cart? Well, I am glad you asked. Laughter Lounges are rooms in hospitals that are stocked with personal DVD players, MP3 or IPODS, headsets, TV sets, DVD/VHS players, comedy movies, comedy shows, comedy radio programs, comedy books, comic books, comic pages from newspapers, couches, lounge chairs and anything that has to do with helping someone laugh. Laughter Carts are the same concept, but on wheels.

The idea is to have these lounges and carts available to every patient, and even for their visitors, as a place where they can experience the healing power of laughter. Therefore the name for the whole project, **Laughter 4 Life**. With the research contributing more and more to the idea that laughter can have a positive healing effect, Laughter Lounge and Carts are a definite way we can help others, even people we don't know.



You may have noticed that I said "we can help." As I speak around the country I ask schools to help me in my challenge and start a Laughter 4 Life (L4L) program at their local hospital. For my part, I will donate up to 10% of all speaking fees and sales at your school to your L4L program. If you are interested in the L4L for a group, class or club project for school go to [www.paperwadideas.com](http://www.paperwadideas.com) and click on the L4L logo. From there you will be directed to a website which will give you the steps on starting the program. In addition, please feel free to contact me at [scott@paperwadideas.com](mailto:scott@paperwadideas.com) if you have any questions.

## Thoughts and Ideas from the Road

I have been lucky enough to have given numerous presentations and workshops over the past few months. While traveling to these great places (nothing is quite like flying into Washington D.C. National Airport at sunset, or driving through the fog shrouded hills of Kentucky), it has been the wonderful people I have met, which make these trips special. First, there is the hospitality that everyone has shown me. Thanks to every one who helped me feel like I was an actual staff member. You were great. Second, the reactions to the *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously!* workshops were fantastic. It proved to me three things I already knew: one, that we are all stressed about teaching; two, that we want to lessen the stress; and three, most importantly, we all love to laugh.

Finally, it was great to hear your ideas (and jokes) that you plan on using in your classroom. From the teacher in Indiana who has his students write down a five line Emergency Laughter List and then keeps them in the classroom in order to use them throughout the year to the teacher in Ohio who starts the year by having students write down what they don't like about school and then throw it away, all of you are definitely promoting that *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously!* Thanks!

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

Arrrghh you ready for some fun? This month includes my favorite theme day, Talk Like a Pirate Day (19th). My challenge to you is to get your principal to read the announcements on the 19th in pirate talk.

Good luck and remember, all of these are celebrated by someone, somewhere. Enjoy!

September

### Month

Fall Hat Month

National Chicken Month

National Piano Month

National School Success Month

Subliminal Communication Month

National Biscuit Month

National Coupon Month

National Rice Month

Shameless Promotion Month

### Weeks

1-7 International Enthusiasm Week

3-9 National Waffle Week

5-9 Play Days

11-15 National No Bully Week

17-23 Bottled Water Week

17-23 National Love Your Files Week

18-22 Substitute Teacher Appreciation Week

### Days

1 Chicken Boy's Day

2 Bison-Ter-Yell Day

5 Be Late for Something Day

8 Wonderful Weirdos Day

10 Cartoonists Day

12 Video Game Day

13 International Chocolate Day

16 International Eat an Apple Day

19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

22 Hobbit Day

23 Fish Amnesty Day

24 Innergize Day

24 Punctuation Day

27 Fish Tank Floor Show Night

1 Emma N Nutt Day

3 Waffle Day

7 Grandma Moses Day

10 Sew Be It! Day

10 National Grandparents Day

13 Fortune Cookie Day

15 Someday

17 Time's Up Day

22 Elephant Appreciation Day

22 National White Chocolate Day

23 R.E.A.D. in America Day

24 National Good Neighbor Day

25 National One-Hit Wonder Day

30 Pumpkin Day

## Quote of the Month

*Smile. Your Smile Can Be Heard*

Instructions for employees to answer the telephone  
at the Crockett Hotel, San Antonio, TX