



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS
WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

**NAASLN Membership News & Views
Issue Twenty-Four – March/April 2009**

NAASLN Membership News & Views is an outgrowth of the NAASLN Vision to offer our members a centralized hub of information, professional development, technical assistance, communication on issues and trends, and advocacy initiatives on behalf of adults with special learning needs.

Don't forget.....

→ Stay tuned in and connected by renewing your 2009 membership.
Go to www.naasln.org/membership

Don't miss.....

→ Use your membership discount for NAASLN's April Webinars (Internet-based Seminars):

April 7: Dyslexia – Attention Deficit Disorder – Learning Differences: It's not just academics that keep these adults from succeeding. Presenter: Robyn Rennick

April 29: Learning Styles: How to reach all individuals with learning style differences. Presenter: Donita Kaare

Go to <http://www.naasln.org/webinars.htm>

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President's Message—

Joan Hudson-Miller, NAASLN Acting President

Call for nominations for the new 2009-2011 NAASLN Board of Directors!

That's right. NAASLN's current board terms will end on June 30. We are so proud of what we have accomplished in the last two years. All of our efforts have been directed at responding to the needs of our members and all professional serving adults with special learning needs by adapting our offerings to the current economic conditions and technological advances. These efforts have produced our revised, vibrant and ever evolving web site, our new Webinar Series of monthly Internet-based seminars and our new regional conferences, the first of which was successfully held in February in Maryland (See review below.).

Yes, we are proud of what we accomplished, but our numbers are few and we sure could use some help, fresh ideas and energy. So this is your chance to make a difference and help guide and impact NAASLN's mission to help adults with special learning needs achieve their life long learning, transition, and workforce goals with expanded professional development opportunities for all those who work with, are part of, and serve this population.

In April the Nominations Committee, in compliance with the NAASLN bylaws, will be soliciting nominations for the 20 directors positions. You can either submit a nomination for someone else or for yourself.

All board members must be current NAASLN members, so make sure that you or your nominee has renewed for 2009 (www.naasln.org/membership.htm).

Watch for follow up announcements via email and on our web site: www.naasln.org

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Regional Conference Delivers Intimate, Practical, Hands-On Training
Pat Walsh, NAASLN Board Members and Conference Co-Chair

"Best conference I have attended in many years," said one participant after NAASLN's recent Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, Access to the Workforce for Adult and Adolescent Learners with AD/HD and Asperger's Syndrome. "I received helpful information. I'm excited to share when I get back to work."

Held at Bon Secours Conference Center in Marriottsville, Md., the Feb. 22 – 23 conference drew participants primarily from Maryland and New Jersey. But those seeking proven techniques that work with these populations came from as far away as Texas.

Responding to calls for what NAASLN does best—intimate, practical, and hands-on training—the conference featured presentations by board members with years of experience in their fields. Richard Cooper, Ph.D., covered AD/HD and Entrepreneurism...A Curriculum that Works! as well as guided practice in his new book *Test Anxiety Student Manual* (see review below). Asperger's Syndrome, Part I: The Adult Education Class was handled by Bevan Gibson, M.S.; Part II: Transitioning from Secondary to Postsecondary Education was handled by Melissa Arnott-Cox, Ed.D.

Jennifer Maloney, director of the National Coalition for Literacy, previewed the association's new online advocacy toolkit. More about that can be found below, *National Coalition for Literacy Launches Online Advocacy Toolkit*.



Dr. Melissa Arnott leads a discussion on access to postsecondary education



Bevan Gibson discusses Asperger's Syndrome and transition

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30th Annual IACEA Conference

IACEA—The Voice of Adult Educators in Illinois

Peg Kennedy, Development Support Specialist, Olney Central College
Robinson, IL

The 30th Annual IACEA (Illinois Adult and Continuing Education Association) Conference held in Springfield, Ill., March 4-6 was a huge success. Conference Chair and NAASLN member, Donita Kaare, chose “Learning in the Land of Lincoln” as the theme for this year’s annual meeting, and learning was the main activity during the three jammed-packed days. There were 71 sessions during this three-day event, including many sessions on teaching techniques for the ABE/GED classroom; Evidence-Based Reading Instruction; transition; suggestions for the Department of Corrections classrooms; ESL; administrator foundations; mnemonic devices; tutor training; technology-based learning; retention; and, in keeping with the Lincoln theme, there were on-site tours of the old State Capitol Building and the new Abraham Lincoln Museum.

Participants were inspired by the Keynote Speaker, Bob Love. Love was the greatest player to ever wear a Chicago Bulls uniform before Michael Jordan and scored 12,263 points in his marvelous career. A three-time NBA All-Star who averaged 23 points per game over eight seasons, Bob had his jersey retired by the Chicago Bulls on Jan. 14, 1994. Despite his great success as an athlete, Love was unable to do something we all take for granted—speak without stuttering. Forty years later, Bob would realize his dream not only to speak clearly but also to become a professional speaker. It was a heartwarming speech, riveting to everyone who was privileged to hear it.

Other speakers that might be recognizable were Neil Sturomski, consultant for his own company, Sturomski & Associates, whose primary mission is to help adult educators, literacy practitioners, employers, and job training program instructors better meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities. Neil is the former Director of the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center in Washington D.C. and is also a NAASLN member.

Lee Ann Piano, having appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show, spoke on “Handling ‘Hard to Handle’ People Speaking with Tact and Skill.” Libby Smith, Director of the GED/Adult Literacy Programs for the Regional Office of Education in Normal, IL, spoke on “Crisis in

the Classroom: Danger or Opportunity?”

Presenting a NAASLN strand was Board Treasurer and well-known national speaker, Dr. Richard Cooper. Rich is the Director and founder of the Center for Alternative Learning and is the owner of Learning DisAbilities Resources, a firm that produces and distributes educational and motivational materials for individuals with learning differences. He established these organizations to provide services for individuals with learning disabilities and their families, as well as teachers and other professionals interested in learning problems. Rich gave two presentations: “Structured Learning for the Unstructured” and “Helping Students Reduce Test Anxiety.” His most recent publications on Test Anxiety have proven to be a vital addition to any classroom collection. He discussed the practical uses for both the student manual and teacher guide. Rich drew a large audience because the subject is such a persistent problem in every classroom. His demonstration of relaxation techniques drew comments from the audience that always included the word “amazing”.

The successful conference was an inspiring learning opportunity and attendees were stating they couldn’t wait for the next one.

If your program would like to sponsor a regional conference or a NAASLN track at your conference, drop us a line at naasln@naasln.org or call 888-5-NAASLN (888-562-2756). We’re looking forward to hearing from you.

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Take a New Look at Us Now!

Pat Walsh, NAASLN Board Member and Membership Co-Chair

You’ve heard of NAASLN, maybe even attended a conference a few years ago in Denver, Tampa, San Diego, or St. Louis. Or maybe you caught Laura Wiesel or Rich Cooper doing a workshop in Boston or Columbus. You came away with tools to change the lives of your students with special learning needs.

Well, times are rough, now, and you can’t get to those conferences this year. Budget cuts and travel restrictions have you feeling isolated and staid.

Well, take a new look at us now.

NAASLN, the *only* national association for those who work with adults with special learning needs, now brings these tools to you with webinars and regional conferences. We spotlight programs that focus on:

- ESOL
- Vision, hearing, physical, developmental, and specific disabilities
- Learning differences, difficulties, and disabilities
- Mental health, addiction, corrections, and transition
- Accommodations and technology

Take a new look at our board of directors. Can you see yourself there? As a volunteer-

based virtual association with one part-time paid administrator and a consulting webmaster, we need new board members and fresh ideas.

And take a new look at membership—a bargain at \$35 per year—that’s less than 10 cents a day. We are probably the only professional association that has not increased its dues in years. We also offer organizational and student membership rates. And, if you get five colleagues to join, you earn a free membership for yourself.

Now more than ever NAASLN is at the forefront of providing the best professional development to the most providers of services to adults with special learning needs at the lowest costs. We can offer more if you can offer more. What are you waiting for? Renew or join today. And while you are at it, consider joining one of our committees: Policy and Procedures, Communications, Conference, Legislative, Fiscal, Partnership, Membership, or Recruitment.

For a complete listing of all of the membership benefits and a downloadable 2009 Membership Form, go to www.naasln.org/membership.htm. You may pay with credit card or check by fax or by mail. Secure online registration will soon be available.

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2009 Webinars—Internet-Based Seminars Focus on Hot Topics

April 7— Robyn Rennick, *Dyslexia-ADD-Learning Differences*

April 29 – Donita Kaare, *Learning Styles*

May—TBD

June—Robin Schwarz, *Visual and Hearing Issues in Adult ESOL Learners*

July—Rich Cooper, *Structured Learning*

August—Pat Hardman, *Brain Research on Dyslexia*

September 14—Laura Weisel, *Emotions 101*

October 5—Laura Weisel, *Emotions 102*

November—Pat Hardman, *Brain Research on ADHD*

So if you are looking for a high impact, low cost, pertinent national conference in a convenient, comfortable, cost-effective, and locale venue, just pull a chair up to your computer, dial in the conference number, join in, and learn!

NAASLN offers an added bonus—either attend the live on-line session or purchase the video session, \$20 Members, \$30 Non-Members. You can even do both.

For up-to-date details, go to <http://www.naasln.org/webinars.htm>.

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Spotlight Topic of the Month

National Coalition for Literacy Launches Online Advocacy Toolkit

Jennifer Maloney, Director, National Coalition for Literacy

The National Coalition for Literacy (NCL), a national leadership organization dedicated to advancing adult education in the United States, has launched its new online Advocacy Clearinghouse and Toolkit (www.ncladvocacy.org). Developed with an aim to change the conversation about adult education in the U.S., the toolkit provides adult education and literacy advocates with the tools and knowledge to raise awareness and speak for the needs of 30+ million Americans with limited literacy and the 11+ million

who cannot communicate in English.

Recent statistics from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) show that 1 in 7 U.S. adults have below basic literacy skills. They have difficulty finding employment, supporting their children's education, and negotiating the health care system due to low literacy, lack of a high school education, and limited English skills. Although the numbers remain little changed from similar statistics taken 15 years ago, federal support and resources for adult education have steadily declined over the years.

During this period of economic crisis, millions of adults are in search of improving their education and work skills in order to re-enter the workforce. There is no greater time than now for states and the federal government to invest in adult education, and NCL hopes to push that effort forward by providing the tools and resources to adult education advocates across the country.

Containing dozens of resources, facts, and reports provided by member organizations of the NCL, the Advocacy Clearinghouse and Toolkit is a "one-stop shop" for all advocates interested in improving adult education. This project has been generously supported by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, which invests millions of dollar each year in literacy programs that help individuals reach their full potential.

The NCL is a national adult education leadership organization comprised of member organizations and adult education professionals, committed to promoting adult education and literacy, family literacy, and English language development in the US. NCL advances adult education, language, and literacy by fostering collaboration at the national level among public and private organizations.

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Website of the Month

NCL's Advocacy Clearinghouse and Toolkit (<http://www.ncladvocacy.org>) is both easy to use and extensive in its applications. Learn to contact legislators, find literacy facts fast, plan your time, develop effective strategies, write a press release, and much more. This one-stop collection of public policy advocacy resources is designed to assist you in advocating for adult literacy at the federal level. As an adult literacy advocate, you may already be part of an alert network; however, you must quickly locate the tools you need in order to act. Check it out and share your feedback with NCL.

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Advocacy Update—

NCL 2009 Literacy Leadership Awards

The National Coalition for Literacy is currently seeking nominations for its annual Literacy Leadership Awards. The NCL Literacy Leadership Awards recognize individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to improving literacy in the United States. Recipients of the award have demonstrated their commitment by supporting literacy on the state and national level. NCL members are not eligible for this award.

Nomination letters must include a one-page summary of the nominee's qualifications and contributions to the field, biographical information, and complete contact information.

Please submit nominations to Sherrie Claiborne at sherrienevilsclaiborne@hotmail.com by April 30, 2009. Award recipients will be announced in early May. The 2009 Literacy Leadership Awards will be presented on Wednesday, September 16, at the James Madison Building of the Library of Congress.

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Book Review—

Test Anxiety Guide Offers Calm Alternatives

Peg Kennedy, Development Support Specialist, Olney Central College
Robinson, IL

An exciting soft-bound workbook on test anxiety has been recently published by Richard Cooper, PhD, founder of Center for Alternative Learning, and Carole Champlin, MA, Program Director of Liberal Studies and Psychology at Harcum College in Pennsylvania.



Rich Cooper shares techniques from his new publication *Test Anxiety Student Manual*

Test anxiety is a serious issue among many students and needs to be approached systematically in an attempt to help students overcome any problem they may have with it.

This is just the book to do it.

Filled with questionnaires and charts to help students become aware of their own anxiety levels, the book can be used by an individual student alone or with the assistance of a teacher, who can use the accompanying Teacher Guide as a resource. Charts and forms help the individual to analyze his own reactions in a variety of testing situations.

The authors describe “everyday stressors” and ask the readers to rate their own stressors. These are then ranked on the Everyday Stress Meter that is designed similar to a speedometer. This is a great visual tool to help the students truly get a good picture of their own anxiety levels. On the left: 0 = unbothered; 1 = somewhat irritated; 2 = irritated; 3 = angry; 4 = very angry; 5 = rage.

Next students will fill out a questionnaire, giving their own Stress History. It is basically short answers, a couple of sentences. Another list is for major stressors or crisis situations the students have experienced, and then places that on the Crisis Meter, which measures: 1 = focused (peak performance); 2 = great strain but capable; 3 = freeze momentarily then act; 4 = unfocused, error prone; 5 = immobilized. The authors are careful to caution the individual that ranking in the immobilized category might call for consulting a professional for further help.

The section on the Nature of Anxiety differentiates between “realistic anxiety” and “neurotic or everyday anxiety” with the focus on the latter. It is triggered by the evolutionary “fight or flight” response when adrenaline arises. This was a response that

was needed for survival for the caveman, but today, most people don't need all that energy, but "the energy arises anyway in certain stressful situations. The symptoms are rapid heartbeat, increased pulse rate, sweaty palms, or attention to everything going on around us." All this extra energy, when not used physically, can be an obstacle to performance, especially in a situation in which the person is asked "to sit quietly, concentrate, think, and write correct answers." Occasionally, this can result in a full-fledged panic attack.

The author's point out that test anxiety is "real" and can appear in many forms: sweaty palms, rapid heartbeat, nausea, headache, difficulty swallowing, or mind going blank. These are all "expressions of real fear."

It is also pointed out that some "anxiety can be an advantage—because it makes people more attentive to the immediate task, and gives them the extra energy (adrenaline) needed to complete an exam/test/physical challenge successfully. Telling a person who has "real" anxiety to "calm down and take the test" is not helpful and next to impossible.

The exercises in the workbook will assist the individual in analyzing and understanding his own personal anxieties and responses to stress, making him better able to advocate for himself when faced with these situations.

Continuing with the use the speedometer-style visual, there is a Test Anxiety Meter, on which the students can rank their own anxiety levels as: 1 = very low; 2 =low; 3= medium; 4 = high; 5 = very high.

Avoidance is "one way that people react to stress." The last meter is one on which students can rank their own Avoidance Behaviors from 0-5: 0 = positive; 1 = mild; 2 = significant; 3 = limiting; 4 = excessive; 5 = dangerous.

It is stressed by the authors that, "These exercises are not tests; they are opportunities...To become more aware of physical behaviors and emotions that you may have interpreted as symptoms of illness, temporary annoyances, unimportant blips on your personal radar, or even as figments of your imagination."

Part II of this amazing little book is a discussion and exercises on stress-reducing techniques. "Understanding stress and anxiety is the first step. Developing the ability to cope with stress before it produces the symptoms of anxiety is the next step."

While the techniques for dealing with stress differ from individual to individual, the ones that are covered are: desensitization, affirmations, self-talk, reframing, visualization, self-awareness, goal-setting, relaxation, progressive relaxation, study skills, test taking techniques, test question analysis, and test accommodations for individuals who have learning disabilities.

The accompanying teacher's guide contains all the pages that are in the students' copy in addition to pages printed on yellow paper for the use by the teacher. In the first part, the guide is meant as an additional tool. Although any teacher may have had moments of test anxiety herself, she may never have experienced it to the severity that many students do. There is an exercise that guides the teacher to the "brink" of panic, giving her that "aha moment" of what her students experience during an attack. In Part II, the yellow sheets are for the instructor to try the various techniques prior to guiding the students through them, giving the instructor a greater sense of the process.

Test Anxiety by Cooper and Champlin is a must for teachers, parents, students, and other educational professionals. It is quite reasonably priced (Student Manual \$5, Teacher's Guide \$9), but it's worth a million!

Anyone interested in more information can go to the following website:

www.learningdifferences.com

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Success Story—



Rob Wheeldon

Man-U-Script Draws on Man's Life Script

Rob Wheeldon is an Adult dyslexic from Macclesfield England, home of the famous band Joy Division. He grew up with a great interest in science and the arts, which he always felt excluded from until he discovered the great number of successful dyslexics in these fields.

"I want to use my words too help other dyslexics find their voice which has been silent for to long."

Rob invites you to his blog Man-U-Script, an exploration of poetry philosophy and deep ecology, at <http://man-u-script.blogspot.com>. Here's a sample:

Music of the collapsing spheres

By Rob Wheeldon

The black light of creation
Forms the rainbow of the sky
And from the dust comes heat
That illuminates the sky

One twin escapes and one returns
And this is how the wheel is turned
The darkest form of energy
A wholly fearful symmetry

Behold the destroyer and creator of worlds
The darkness that must come out the light?
The very source of all which must ignite
And the radiance of the sun turned in would

All potential is forged within me
My hand upon the face of the water of time
The movement of eternity

Maxwell's Demon set free
From the eternal constant it rises
The sea of light unfolded
Releasing Pandora's touch upon the living world

In the dreamtime all was created
This is where all worlds were fated
An essence to which all that was given must return
The efficient cause of quantum laws

A singular event which only the imaginary time can circumvent
On the levels of quantum reality this where we find this wave of duality
When the lens sees very large it only sees the quantum charge
When the lens sees very small we see the linkage of it all

Deep within are D.N.A is coded the way all life on earth unfolded
And Myth and truth can form a ridge
To jump across the synaptic bridge

On the planet that breaths is the tree of life
And the fruit of that tree is people who know
Even the darkest hole is radiant

Calling All Success Stories!

*Are you a success story? An adult who overcame a special learning need? If so, **NAASLN Membership News and Views** is looking for you? **Send us your stories.** A look back in your life can be an inspiration for others to look ahead.*

NAASLN is committed to ensuring and expanding opportunities for adults with special learning needs so that they can become successful and productive lifelong learners. Join in NAASLN's commitment by sharing your own story or one about someone else. Send your stories to newsletter@naasln.org or info@naasln.org.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events
(*Features a NAASLN Road Trip Track)

Uncharted Mountains, Forging New Pathways
March 25-29
TESOL Convention, Denver, CO

****COABE Annual Conference***
NAASLN Pre-Conference April 18
April 18-22
Louisville, KY

New Jersey Health Literacy Summit
April 3
Mt. Laurel, NJ

CCAE State Conference
California Council of Adult Educators

April 30-May 1
Pasadena Hilton, Pasadena, CA

***Missouri Valley Adult Education Conference**
June 3-9
Westin Crown Center, Kansas City

CEA Annual Conference
July 19-22
Madison, WI

AAACE Annual Conference
Nov. 1-6
Cleveland, OH

***NAASLN Road Trip Tracks**

Watch the NAASLN Website Calendar for more information on events where NAASLN will be presenting special tracks, pre-conferences, or sessions. As they are confirmed, they will be posted on our website: www.naasln.org/calendar.htm.

If your state organization wants to feature a NAASLN-on-the-Road track, please contact Bevan Gibson at bqibson@siue.edu or Laura P. Weisel at powerpath@aol.com. It's a great way to add a national angle to your local professional development conferences.

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Membership Update

Did you enjoy this issue? Continue to be a part of NAASLN's dynamic e-community. If you have not yet done so, please by send in your \$35 annual membership fee today. NAASLN is the only national association for those who serve adults with special learning needs. Members are people like you—educators, trainers, employers, human service providers, and adult learners—who are committed to ensuring and expanding opportunities for adults with special learning needs to become successful and productive lifelong learners.

For a complete listing of all of the membership benefits and a 2008 Membership Form, go to www.naasln.org/membership.htm. You may pay with credit card or check, by fax or by mail. Secure online registration will soon be available.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

NAASLN is devoted to enhancing the opportunities for life-long learning for adults with special learning needs by improving the efforts of adult educators working with these individuals in the full range of life-long learning programs, i.e., ABE, ESL, GED.

Future Newsletter Submissions

Help us meet your needs. Recommend or submit an article, event announcements, book reviews, and web sites links. Either E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or send to: Joan Hudson-Miller, 3849 Albright Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90066 or Fax to 310-354-2601.

All submissions will be reviewed for appropriateness for our readership and will be selected at the discretion of the newsletter editors.

Sharing information

Do you have ideas on how you would like to better network with other members? Are there other features you would like to see in this Newsletter and on our website? E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or leave a message on at 888-5NAASLN (888-562-2756).

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Help Spread the Word

Please forward this newsletter to other educators and interested parties. If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to become a member of NAASLN and a regular subscriber, send an email to info@naasln.org for membership information or visit our web site: www.naasln.org/membership.htm.

We practice Permission Marketing. Go to our website to read our Privacy newsletter@naasln.org.

If you ever want to stop receiving this e-newsletter, reply to newsletter@naasln.org and type 'Unsubscribe' in the body of the email.

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Send comments or questions about this newsletter by email to newsletter@naasln.org.

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