

*"Teachers  
 By  
 Calling..."*

*Professionals  
 By  
 Choice!"*

*"Your  
 Professional  
 Alternative"*

*"To measure is to know. When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers you know something about it. If you cannot measure it, you cannot control it, if you cannot control it, you cannot improve it."  
 - Lord Kelvin*



## U.S. Secretary of Education Meets with Professional Educators of Tennessee

Washington, DC – U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings met with a coalition of non-union professional teachers associations to discuss key education issues facing the nation. Walter Jewell, Executive Director of Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET), headed up the state's delegation during the week-long leadership conference held in the nation's capital.

"Professional Educators of Tennessee has a voice in our state capital and in Washington, D.C.," Mr. Jewell said. "It is important to have our voices heard, even at the highest level. Secretary Spellings was pleased to meet with us and wants to work with PET to help achieve our mutual goals of improving education in America."

In the meeting, Secretary Spellings addressed special education provisions in No Child Left Behind - an education reform initiative by the Bush Administration designed to improve national student achievement. The U.S. Department of Education oversees its implementation.

Secretary Spellings also addressed a \$100 million Bush Administration proposal which would allow funds to be made available to the states to develop and implement innovative ways to provide incentives for educators who raise student achievement in some of America's highest-needs schools. Congress is currently considering the initiative.

"Secretary Spellings listened to our concerns and rendered invaluable, first-hand information about the priorities of the Department," Jewell said. "She was clear that she intended to work with states like Tennessee to improve our education system." Earlier in the week Jewell had met with members of Congress and Congressional staffers at the U.S. Capitol. "We still have changes left to make in 'No Child Left Behind' and we are confident that we are impacting improvements, through commonsense discourse with those who can bring those changes to pass."



## Potential Grants in the Humanities

For those of you whose discipline is in the humanities, some of the best grants and workshops are from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Several minutes spent at their website, [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov), can give you many new ideas and maybe lead you to an adventure you will remember for a lifetime. Now, realize that this is coming from a math/science person. If you think you are too busy for the whole site, cut to the chase and go directly to the grants page at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/grantsbydivision.html>.

If you haven't visited our web site in a while, try it. You might find just what you need.

<http://www.teacherspet.com>



## 2005 Annual Conference

June 10-11 in Knoxville, Tennessee

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Beginning early Friday morning conference registration was efficiently handled by **Bernice Jewell** and **Vanessa Bolton**, PET's Office Manager

We were welcomed to Knoxville by the President of the Knox County Local, **Marcy Conway**, and Knoxville's Mayor **Bill Haslam**



PET's President, **Cathy Kolb** opened the official meeting with "Call to Order".

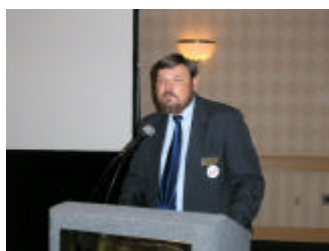
**Andy Darlington** 2005 National Christian Educator led us in a devotional and prayer using her cloth of many colors. Looking at the cloth on its unfinished side helped us see ourselves as god's unfinished work.



**Carolyn Snowbarger** of the U.S. Department of Education traveled from Washington DC to discuss the current success of *No Child Left Behind* (see accompanying "Results" articles) and the opportunity for teachers to be involved at a national level. She brought information about the Department's website that provides educators free access to digital workshops, anytime, anywhere. Carolyn discussed the plan to host summer workshops in six cities across the country

this summer. The results of past Teacher-to-Teacher workshops are used to provide "eLearning" on the website at: [www.ed.gov/teacherinitiative](http://www.ed.gov/teacherinitiative). She also mentioned the recognition of the "American Stars of Teaching" – teachers across all grade levels and disciplines who are improving student achievement, using innovative strategies, and making a difference in the lives of their students. If you are interested in keeping up to date on Department activities sign-up at: [www.teacherquality.us](http://www.teacherquality.us).

**Randy Hankins**, Tennessee Department of Education – brought us the news from Nashville. He discussed new legislation and its effect on the classroom teacher. Randy also covered the changes in Lottery funds access and board policies. He also informed those in attendance of the formation of a group called "Tennessee Governmental Prayer Alliance, which can be found at [www.tngpa.com](http://www.tngpa.com).



**Walter Jewell**, PET Executive Director gave both the Financial and Director's report for the year. He not only described the events and results of the past year, but also explained strategies and plans for the coming year.

Walter gave out the Executive Directors Award of Merit for outstanding volunteer service to the organization. From left to right the recipients were: Marcy Conway, Frank Brown, Kim Blevins, Vickie Huddleston, Cheryl Chambers, Cheryl Walker, and Bill Gemmill.



way, Frank Brown, Kim Blevins, Vickie Huddleston, Cheryl Chambers, Cheryl Walker, and Bill Gemmill.



Director Jewell presented Dewey Esquinance with a donation from PET Foundation to help the Tennessee State History Championship team go to the national competition.



Folk County High School student, Erin Campbell won first place in the Individual Documentary category at the State History Fair at the University of Memphis. She also won the award for best project on Women in History. Campbell's documentary "Women Correspondents in World War II, Communicating the Images of War through the Eyes of Women", was produced as a class project in Multimedia 2 class at Folk County High School. According to her teacher Dewey Esquinance, students learn to film and edit video using computer software, and then apply that knowledge to several hands-on projects including the History Documentary, Football Highlight Video, and the Prom Video. PETF funds were used for the trip to the University of Maryland, where Erin and four other PCHS students, TJ Baxter, Amand Fugate, Eric Gentry and Clee McKnight competed with other state champions from across the Nation.

Robert Bowlin represented Liberty Mutual, our partner for high quality / low cost automobile and home owner insurance.



Jill Shirley, and Dean Hall represented AIG-VALIC, our partner for financial and retirement planning



Both partners gave grants that partially funded our delicious luncheon in the scenic River View Room high atop the Marriott Hotel.



Cathy Kolb, president of PET, returned after lunch to give an inspiring talk about the heart-ache and joy of being a classroom teacher. During Cathy's presidents report she received a motion and vote to elect those nominated to the state board of directors: Frank Bellamy, Martha "Marty" Clark and William "Bill Gemmill. President Kolb installed Ms. Clark who is a new member of the board.

Next attendees divided for the purpose of Committee formation and the initial meetings of those Committees. During this time each Committee identified its objectives and purposes, as well as recruited members. Some Committees went so far as to discuss potential projects. The Committees are as follows: Legislative, Communication, Nominations, Local Support, University/College of Education/Relations, Audit/Review, Member Benefits, Member Recruitment and Retention, Professional Development, and Bylaws.

Harry Crain, PET General Counsel, discussed some of the current types of cases. What seemed to be of greatest interest to the membership was dealing with legal conflict and learning of their rights and responsibilities.



Kent Hovind, Creation Science Evangelism delivered a discussion of the current hot topic: Creation vs. Evolution. Dr. Hovind began his presentation by explaining what rights teachers had to discuss the topic of creation in the classroom. He discussed the topic from many directions including: age of the earth, incredible creatures, evolution is a religion, what does anthropology support, what does botany



support, is there scientific evidence for evolution, scientific creationism, the fable of fossils, and Cryptozoology. In a rapid-fire manner, he discussed so many areas that many members followed Dr. Hovind to an after dinner presentation that evening to learn more. The consensus seemed to be that it was good to hear "the rest of the story" about a current topic.





**Tracey Bailey**, 1993 National Teacher of the Year, was his usual bright, shining, and high-energy self very early (especially for those of us from the Central Time Zone) Saturday morning. Tracey shared with us what life was like for the high school science teacher who was selected as the 1993 National Teacher of the Year. He shared freely the good stories and the bad, including the support he received from his lovely wife Rose both before and after their marriage. Then Tracey shared with us things related to his current position with AAE. He has been heavily involved with making **No Child Left Behind** more flexible both in "Highly Qualified Teacher" certification and "Accountability for Students with Disabilities."

**Heather Lawrence**, AAE Director of Communications, presented basic tips for talking to the Media. She emphasized the need to remain focused and stay on message. Do this by knowing your message (at least three points) ahead of time and returning to that message always. Heather said, "It helps to use simple language and less jargon while sticking with the facts."



**Dennis Farrell**, PET Director of Professional Development led a "Resolving Conflict" workshop. Participants first took a survey to determine their primary "Conflict Style." After a discussion of advantages, disadvantages, and appropriate times to use each style, Dennis went to the second model. This Conflict Resolution model is used to develop Win-Win results when possible.

### Conflict Style

What style are you? When might that style help or hurt?



### Conflict Resolution

A step-by-step process to reach agreement with another willing participant.

## Two students win PEN's first annual scholarship awards

Professional Educators of Nashville (PEN) recognizes and awards student achievement and desire for success.

Nashville, TN May 10, 2005 Stratford High School student Roderick Tisdale and Christina Runkel of Overton High School are the recipients of the first scholarships ever offered by the local affiliate of Professional Educators of Tennessee. The scholarships were awarded by Professional Educators of Nashville President Bill Gemmill at the recipient's respective school during the awards ceremonies at each location.

Runkel and Tisdale are both attending Middle Tennessee State University this fall, and both expect to use the scholarship money to assist in the purchase of books and materials. They were chosen among several candidates at each school because of their strong desire to succeed and evidence of good citizenship within the school environment. "Both students were highly recommended by their respective guidance counselors and assistant principals", said Gemmill. "Being an assistant principal myself makes me appreciate the fact that both of these young people are willing to go the extra mile to present themselves as model students and citizens. They are examples of who we hope will be our leaders of the future", he said.





## Professional Educators of Tennessee Foundation Awards Student Educator Scholarship

**Tara Tiller**, pictured here with her Principle Johnny Chandler and PET's Executive Director Walter Jewell, is an eighth grade math teacher at Dickson Middle School in the Dickson County School system. Ms. Tiller says she hopes, "to gain empathy for my current administrators. I will also be able to observe the programs that they have in place and the routines that they have established and one day be able to use them in my own administration."

Mrs. Tiller's Assistant Principal Christie Southerland said, "She developed an exceptional rapport with the students ... is respected by the students and her fellow teachers. While she is diplomatic with parents, fellow teachers, and administrators ... I have no doubt that she will make an outstanding administrator."

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## The Three Reasons We Must Teach History

By Walter A. McDougall

"If we act only for ourselves," wrote Samuel Johnson, "to neglect the study of history is not prudent. If we are entrusted with the care of others of others it is not just."

"Prudence" and "justice" are often two words conspicuous by their absence in our otherwise verbose debates on how, why, and what to teach to American children. The infamous National Standards for History, for instance, were criticized from many perspectives, but to my knowledge I was the only reviewer to question the strength of those Standards as well as their weakness. I found them altogether too inclusive, demanding, and sophisticated for high school teachers and students. For instance, I considered the Standards' repeated invitations to debunk the sainted image of Woodrow Wilson entirely legitimate, but asked whether "it is wise to teach grade-schoolers that Wilson was foolish or hypocritical to proclaim democracy, disarmament, self-determination, free trade, and a League of Nations to a war-ravaged world?" A college seminar should take a critical stance toward the icons of American history. But is it prudent to turn 11th graders into cynics with regard to the values their nation holds dear?

The sterility of the ongoing debate over history standards may be explained by the failure of combatants of all political stripes to acknowledge and grapple with the fact that the teaching of history serves three functions at once. One, obviously, is intellectual. History is the greatest vehicle for vicarious experiences; it truly educates ("leads outward" in the Latin) provincial young minds and obliges them to reason, wonder, and brood about the vastness, richness, and tragedy of the human condition. If taught well, it trains young minds in the rules of evidence and logic, teaches them how to approximate truth through the patient exposure of falsehood, and gives them the mental trellis they need to place themselves in time and space, and organize every other sort of knowledge they acquire in the humanities and sciences. To deny students history, therefore, is to alienate them from their community, nation, culture, and species.

The second pedagogical function of history is quite different, and often seems to conflict with the first. That is its civic function. From the ancient Israelites and Greeks to the medieval church to the modern nation-state, those charged with educating the next generation of leaders or citizens have used history to impart a reverence for the values and institutions of the creed or state. The civic purpose of history cannot be abolished since all history—traditional or subversive of tradition—has a civic effect. So the real questions are whether American schools ought to tilt toward extolling or denouncing our nation's values and institutions, and how the civic function may be fulfilled without violence to the intellectual function of history.

Those questions are painfully hard to resolve, and are a matter of conscience as much as of reason—which brings us to the third, moral, function of history. If honestly taught, history is the only academic subject that inspires humility. Theology used to do that, but in our present era—and in public schools especially—history must do the work of theology. It is, for all practical purposes, the religion in the modern curriculum. Students whose history teachers discharge their intellectual and civic responsibilities will acquire a sense of the contingency of all human endeavor, the gaping disparity between motives and consequences in all human action, and how little control human beings have over their own lives and those of others. A course in history ought to teach wisdom—and if it doesn't then it is not history but something else.

*(Continued on page 6)*



I believe it is possible to pursue all three purposes of history in books and the classroom. None of us will do so without friction and shortfalls because we are no less creaturely than the historical people we teach about. Moreover, the quality of our instruction is limited and skewed by the finite set of facts we know or set before our pupils. However, errors of fact and judgment as to what to include or omit are excusable and correctable. What is inexcusable, and, as Samuel Johnson wrote, unjust, is the willful denial of truth or promotion of falsehood in order to "slam-dunk" into students an intellectual, civic, or moral purpose at the expense of the other two. Johnson may have been thinking about statesmen when he referred to those "entrusted with the care of others." But no one is more entrusted with others' care than teachers, and no teachers more than historians. There is no magic formula for the concoction of curricula that mix the three functions of history. But we could do worse than to follow the prescription of eminent world historian William H. McNeill:

One cannot know everything, hence one must make choices. And just as some facts are more important to know than others, so have certain cultures displayed skills superior to those of others in every time and place in history. Imagine living in proximity to a competitor possessing skills greater than yours. There is no use asserting that your culture is just as good as his. It palpably isn't, and you must do something about it.... Superiority and inferiority, real and perceived, are the substance of human intercourse and the major stimulus to social change throughout history.... And the principle of selection is simply this: what would we need to know in order to understand how the world became what we perceive it to be today? Thus, we must focus the attention of our students on the principal seats of innovation throughout history, while remaining aware of the costly adaptations and adjustments and in many cases the suffering of those conquered or displaced by dint of their proximity to those seats of innovation.

McNeill's principle is no less applicable to U.S. history. An honest history must hear and pass on the laments of those displaced (including many white males) in the course of our nation's growth. But the main story line must remain that of the Euro-American dominant culture, its ideals and aspirations, creativity and service to itself and others in peacetime and war: the good as well as the bad and ugly. For only by learning that story will tomorrow's leaders—of whatever race or sex—know the standards they are supposed to live up to, gain the knowledge needed to excel, and begin to acquire good judgment, without which the power that knowledge imparts is a curse.

*Walter A. McDougall, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, is the Alloy-Ansin Professor of International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania. His latest book is *Promised Land, Crusader State: America's Encounter with the World Since 1776*, and he is currently writing a book with David Gress, on *The Use and Abuse of History*.*



## Measured Results in Metro Nashville Schools

With the "No Child Left Behind" act placing an emphasis on measurement we are beginning to see the truth in the statement made by Lord Kelvin in 1882. Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society said, "To measure is to know. When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers you know something about it. If you cannot measure it, you cannot control it, if you cannot control it, you cannot improve it."

Metro's school-level achievement test results when released in July were very impressive. This year they show double-digit gains in many schools, even in some of the city's most challenging ones.

William Gemmill, the President of PEN (Professional Educators of Nashville) and PET board member had this to say, "The increase in test scores is truly something to celebrate. All of us in Metro Schools work very hard to accomplish what we've witnessed in these results. As a high school administrator, I've seen daily evidence of teachers in all disciplines working with students to help them accomplish their goals. A math teacher will succeed in reaching one of his or her struggling students only if that student can read. I've seen that math teacher tutoring that struggling student in reading. That's cross-discipline teamwork. The high percentage of improvement in test scores is indicative of the high percentage of effort put forth by the outstanding and dedicated professional educators of Nashville. That's success. That's caring."

Smithson-Craighead Academy (SCA), Nashville's first charter school, had phenomenal gains in reading and math (28 and 24 percent respectively). This was not done at the expense of other subjects where there was a 20 percent gain in social studies and science. Sister Sandra Smithson would like to see this as normal nationwide.

Reading scores were increased by 10 percent and more in fifty-two of Metro's one hundred twenty-six schools, with some schools achieving more than 24 percent.

Pedro Garcia, Metro's Director of Schools, is awaiting the breakdown of the test results by socio-economic status demographics. He should be very pleased as gains made by some lower socio-economic schools have improved more than some in the higher demographics. Some of the Enhanced Option schools with over 85 percent economical disadvantaged students have demonstrated increases of 15 percent and more in reading and math while having gains of 20 percent and more in science and social studies.

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## Measured Results in Schools Nation-wide

Results were released from the long-term National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), or "Nation's Report Card" on July 14, 2005, a day that will live in Education History. The nation's 9-year-olds last year posted their best scores in the building-block subjects of reading and math in more than three decades. The test results also showed that academic gaps between racial groups were narrowing across the board but older students, such as seniors in high school, were staying at roughly the same achievement level.

President Bush introduced the results with the following statement, "To ensure that the promise of America reaches all our citizens, we must begin with education.... Our nation took a historic step toward that goal of making sure every child is educated three years ago, when Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. ... We raised the standards, and we said to local school districts, show us. That's all we want to know. We want to know whether or not a child can read.

Over the last five years, American children have made significant gains. Math scores for 13-year-olds have increased by five points. Math scores for 9-year-olds have increased by nine points. And reading scores for 9-year-olds jumped seven points. America's 13-year-olds have earned the highest math scores ever recorded. Nine-year-olds posted the best scores ever in reading and math."

"The gap between white and African American 9-year-olds in reading is the narrowest it's ever been in the history of the 30-year test. These results show that when performance is measured, and schools are held accountable, every child can succeed. That's what it shows. And we're making progress toward achieving a dream where every single child in America gets a good education, and not one child is left behind."

Or as Lord Kelvin said, "When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind."

"...The Nation's Report Card shows that reading scores for African American 9-year-olds have jumped 14 points over the past five years. Math scores have jumped 13 points in the same period of time. These are the highest scores ever in the history of the test. The achievement gap is starting to close. And that's good for the future of America.

"What we have today is some more data that says we're getting better," said Darvin M. Winick, chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees the exam, given periodically to 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds to measure what they know.

Last year, 9-year-olds earned their highest scores ever in both subjects since the tests were first given -- in 1971 for reading and 1973 for math. Most of their improvement came after 1999, the last time this pair of tests was given by the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Education officials attributed the strong showing among 9-year-olds to the emphasis placed in recent years on elementary schools and getting children reading and learning as early as possible.

"It's easier to change things earlier on than it is later on," said Russ Whitehurst, acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Even more to the point, as Tom Peters, a modern leader in corporate thinking puts it, "What Gets Measured, Gets Done."

As good as the numbers look – they are even better. With the reduction of dropout rates these numbers include a larger representation of average and below average students than past tests.

Congratulations to all of you for helping get it done for the children.

# Thoughts From Our State President

## *In A Word*

Usually at this time of year, I am thinking of lesson plans, IEP's, and schedules. For the past few weeks, one word has been floating around in my head. Several incidents and situations have occurred that bring that one word to the forefront each time. It is a word that many have forgotten or have been so preoccupied with living that they have forgotten how vital it is for peaceful coexistence within our daily circle of contacts—people we work with, families, leaders, etc.

It is a word that becomes an act as it is translated and practiced across cultures. The cultures that still believe in this word are fierce defenders of it. I have seen the dissipation of this word in our own country and the times when it is practiced, I see people reach for it hungrily. It feeds the body and soul. It uplifts, encourages, and motivates the discouraged to continue the journey. It is a word that must begin in the home so that teachers may then take the lead to nourish its continued growth.

The word to which I refer is HONOR. This is such a compact word, yet its implications are astounding! The meaning (synonyms) of this word should be the embodiment of the teaching profession. Here are just a few to ponder:

Pay homage  
Reverence  
Deference

Esteem  
Credit to the profession  
Keen sense of ethical conduct

It is not always easy to be the purveyor of this word/act, yet when we stand determined, people will take notice of our passion and will make a conscious effort to help us straighten the ladder of credibility and professionalism of which we teachers must stay at the top.

Cathy A. Kolb



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