

Spring, 2010

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In our next issue, we will have a two-page dedication to Dr. Conrad Castle for those of you who would like to share your memories and offer condolences to his family. Please e-mail your message to Deborah Holt at: [deboraholt@aol.com](mailto:deboraholt@aol.com) no later than April 20, 2010.



# Concepts!

## MAGC Mourns the Loss of Dr. Conrad Castle

It is with great sadness that MAGC informs you of Dr. Conrad Castle's death on February 3, 2010. Dr. Castle came to Mississippi in the early 1980s to take the position of Gifted Specialist at MDE. From the beginning, he became "just Conrad" to all of us...attending board meetings of MAGC and sharing his vision of what gifted education should be. With the help of Dr. Walter Moore, Dr. Castle encouraged and built the collaboration that continues between MAGC and MDE today, pulling teachers and gifted students into committees that established the outcomes documents, teaching strategies, standards, and revised regulations. Well-respected nationally, Conrad worked tirelessly to spread the word about gifted education in Mississippi, encouraging us to share the limelight at NAGC rather than taking credit for himself. Hardly a meeting goes by that I do not say, "Conrad always said..."



Dr. Conrad Castle's legacy will live on in the untold numbers of intellectually, academically, creatively, and artistically gifted students who have benefited from the programs he helped to build. Oh, my friend, how you will be missed.

Carol Paola

MAGC Executive Director



## MAGC Celebrates Rich History

In keeping with the recent celebration of the 35th birthday of MAGC, the history of our association should be recognized. Dr. Frances Karnes of the University of Southern Mississippi and The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies shared how MAGC was formed.

The Karnes family moved to Mississippi from Illinois in 1972. When Dr. Frances Karnes examined the Mississippi School Code, she found the definition of exceptional children. It read like a definition of the disabled as it was lacking the gifted. After consulting with her state representative and senator, it was decided that the definition should be amended to include the gifted. That was accomplished in 1973.

Realizing that there was a need to begin a statewide association to support gifted education, Frances asked several professionals to assist in the organization of the Mississippi Association for the Talented and Gifted now the Mississippi Association for Gifted Children. Dr. Karnes was the first president. Dr. Billie Bob Currie, school psychologist in the Hattiesburg Public Schools was vice-president. Dr. Douglas Everett, assistant superintendent in Meridian, was president-elect. The first annual conference was held in Meridian on October 24-25, 1975.

We have quite the legacy in the Mississippi Association of Gifted Children. It is our responsibility as gifted educators to carry the torch and keep what others before us fought so hard to get in place. We thank Dr. Frances Karnes and many others who, over the years, have ensured the success of gifted education for our brightest students in Mississippi.

*Meet our Board-Members:  
Each issue, we will focus on a different MAGC Board member so you can get to know them better. This issue, we will spotlight Dr. Sandee Manning, President-Elect and Lisa Saucier, Membership Chair.*

## **A Word From our MAGC President...**

The year 2010 has brought many challenges with it. One of those challenges is the budget cuts that our state is facing. As the state makes these budgets cuts, education will receive a cut in financial support. One of the anticipated cuts may be in the area of gifted education. As a teacher of gifted students and a parent of a gifted child, I realize the importance of gifted education. This program is not an add-on program as some call it but a vital part of education in our state. Mississippi is currently serving over 30,000 intellectually gifted students, over 1,000 artistically gifted students, 700 creatively gifted students, and over 2,000 academically gifted students. These students need the very best education possible. For the last 35 years gifted education has grown in our state. We cannot afford to take a step back but we need to grow toward the future as we prepare our students for the twenty-first century. Please let us join together to thank the legislators in Mississippi for their support of gifted education and urge them to continue funding gifted education in our state.

MAGC is actively asking for your support as we work with the Mississippi Legislature throughout the year. Please join us February 25 as we host a Coffee Break at the capital. We are also urging everyone to write a card or letter of thanks to your legislator. Please check our website [www.magcweb.org](http://www.magcweb.org) for more information about up-coming events.

We also ask for your participation in our 2010 MAGC Conference in Biloxi. Please consider submitting a proposal for the conference. I am always amazed at the wealth of great teaching ideas in our state. Let's make the 2010 MAGC Conference one of the best!

Finally keep the faith! I truly believe that Mississippi has some of the best teachers and parents in all of the United States. If MAGC can be of service to you, I am only an e-mail away!

MAGC President,  
Sherry Willis  
[sherry@rcrotorworld.com](mailto:sherry@rcrotorworld.com)



## **Meet our MAGC Membership Chair**

Lisa Saucier is proud to have been both a student and a teacher of gifted programs. She has been teaching gifted students for the past 15 years, first in Jackson and currently in Rankin County Schools. She has been twice nominated for Jackson Public Schools' Teacher of the Year and in 2004 received a Parents for Public Schools Outstanding Educator Award. Lisa is certified with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and is a co-writer of Jackson's Core Traits Curriculum. Lisa is a frequent presenter with the MAGC annual conference and has presented various workshops on both the school and district level. On the state level, Lisa served on the 2001 State Textbook Rating Committee and as a member of the Children's Justice Act Task Force. Lisa is currently MAGC's membership chair. She has served MAGC since 2005 when she came on board as the editor of Concepts.



## Executive Director's Message

### The Status of Gifted Education in Mississippi

As we have been long aware, Mississippi has one of the best programs for gifted students in the nation—one that is well worth saving. You may have seen the article “Is American Education Neglecting Gifted Children?” by David Nagel that appeared in many of our newspapers in November. What you have helped to provide for gifted children in Mississippi is far above the norm. I have quoted from the article and added notations about the status of gifted education in Mississippi.

David Nagel wrote:

**“A full fourth of states provided zero funding for programs and resources for gifted students last year;”** (In response... In 2009, the State of Mississippi allocated approximately \$43,000,000 for gifted education. In 2009, 34,558 gifted students were served in Mississippi's schools.)

**“Only five states require professional development for teachers who work in gifted programs;”** (Criterion VI: Professional Development of the Gifted Standards approved by the Mississippi Board of Education in 2004 requires ...”specialized preparation in gifted education, expertise in appropriate differentiated content and instructional methods, involvement in ongoing professional development...” for teachers of the gifted.)

- **“Only five require any kind of preparation for these teachers;”** (Mississippi Department of Education General Guidelines for Mississippi Licensure require supplemental endorsements for teachers of the gifted that include completion of approved programs through an institution of higher learning with institutional program verification required. Currently, 956 MDE certified teachers of the gifted are serving students in 147 school districts in Mississippi.)
  - **“Gifted students spend most of their time in general classrooms and receive little specialized instruction;”** (Mississippi Gifted Standards, approved by the Mississippi Board of Education in 2004, and Mississippi Gifted Regulations, revised and approved in 2006, require a minimum of five hours of instruction per week that is designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and is in addition to and different from that of the regular program of instruction.)
  - **“Key policies are handled at the district level, when there are policies in place at all, rather than at the state level, creating the potential for fractured approaches and limits on funding;”** (The Mississippi Gifted Education Act of 1989, as amended in 1993, mandates that each public school district within the state provide gifted education programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 2-6. All local public school districts may have gifted education programs for intellectually gifted students in grades 7-12, artistically gifted students in grades 2-12, creatively gifted students in grades 2-12, and/or academically gifted students in grades 9-12, subject to the approval of the State Board of Education. Mississippi Gifted Standards (2004), and Mississippi Gifted Regulations (2006), establish requirements and guidelines for policies and funding for gifted education.)
- “There is no coherent national strategy for dealing with gifted students.”** (This last accusation is very true, but Mississippi is clearly at the forefront in regard to what is provided for our state's gifted children!)

Be proud of what we have accomplished for gifted children in Mississippi. This has been achieved through the combined efforts of our Mississippi legislature, the Mississippi Department of Education, MAGC, and YOU...the parents and teachers of gifted kids. Let your legislators and our friends at MDE know they are appreciated and that we need their help in protecting gifted education for the gifted children of today and tomorrow.

Carol Paola, MAGC Executive Director



## Meet our MAGC President-Elect

Dr. Sandra Manning is currently serving as President-Elect of MAGC. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Dr. Manning teaches undergraduate courses in Special Education and graduate courses in Gifted Education.

Mississippi Association for Gifted Children

There are several award applications that the Mississippi Association of Gifted Children offers. These awards and the deadlines for application submission are listed below:

- MAGC Summer Gifted Studies Program Scholarship
Deadline: January 30, 2010
The Frances A. Karnes Award for Excellence in Gifted Education
Deadline: March 15, 2010
Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award
Deadline: April 15, 2010
MAGC Parent Advocacy Award of Excellence in Gifted Education
Deadline: April 15, 2010
MAGC Teacher Grant Application
Deadline: April 15, 2010

Applications may be downloaded from our website: www.magcweb.org

The MAGC Executive Board will award two grants this year of up to \$300 for course study. One grant will be presented to an experienced teacher or administrator with gifted certification to pursue additional training in gifted education. The other will be awarded to an experienced regular classroom teacher to pursue gifted certification. The grants will be forwarded to the recipient upon verification of course completion and are limited to actual cost of the course, up to \$300. Additionally, the Gail P. Hammond Teacher Scholarship, carrying an award of \$300, will be awarded to an exceptional regular classroom teacher currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a course of study leading to certification in gifted education. Previous grant/scholarship recipients are not eligible for these awards, and recipients may receive only one scholarship/grant from MAGC. Recipients are expected to attend the annual state conference in the fall of the year in which the grants/scholarships are awarded.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: (Please check all grants/scholarships for which you are eligible)

Input box for grant selection

GRANT FOR TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR WITH GIFTED CERTIFICATION

Applicants must:

- 1. Be an active MAGC Member or submit \$25 membership fee upon application.
2. Have at least two years of teaching experience in the area of gifted education,
3. Be currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a course/workshop for advanced study of gifted education, &
4. Have a history of attendance at conferences and/or workshops that pertain to gifted education.

Input box for grant selection

GRANT FOR TEACHER TO PURSUE GIFTED CERTIFICATION

Applicants must:

- 1. Be an active MAGC Member or submit \$25 membership fee upon application.
2. Have at least two years of teaching experience in the regular classroom, and
3. Be currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a course of study for certification in gifted education.

Input box for grant selection

GAIL P. HAMMOND TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP

Applicants must:

- 1. Be an active MAGC Member or submit \$25 membership fee upon application.
2. Have at least two years of teaching experience in the regular classroom, and
3. Be currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a course of study for certification in gifted education.

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Attach the Following:

- 1. A + least two letters of recommendation/support from a superintendent, principal, program coordinator, and/or other supervisory personnel,
2. Autobiographical statement (200 words or less) describing areas of interest, honors, achievement, and past experiences of workshop and conference attendance, and
3. Brief description of the course/workshop for which the grant would be used.

Please mail completed application form and other required attachments to:

Glenn Nobles • 2605 Sierra Circle • Hattiesburg, MS 39402

## Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award 2009-2010 School Year

MAGC is pleased to announce the continuance of the NAGC-Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Awards for the 2009-2010 school year. The awards are designed to recognize excellence in young children. The awards, which include a \$500 U.S. Savings Bond, may be made to students in grades 3-6 who have distinguished themselves in academics, leadership, or the arts. Nominations will be accepted from the students themselves, parents, teachers, peers, and community and civic groups.

### Selection Criteria:

Students must be in grades 3 through 6 at the time of the nomination.

Outstanding student accomplishment may be in the areas of academics, the arts, or leadership.

Student applicants must submit a written composition about why they feel their effort is important and how they got interested in the area for which they are being recognized. Compositions should describe (1) the activity or interest area for which the student is being nominated; (2) how the student got interested/involvement in the activity; (3) what impact the activity has had on the student and on others; and (4) how the student's future plans and goals have been affected by this activity or interest area.

At least one letter of recommendation, from someone other than a nominee's family member, explaining why the student nominee is deserving of the award, what sets him/her apart from other students, and how the student is impacting others.

### Submission to MAGC:

Completed Student Nomination Form including the signed publicity release form.

Copy of the student's composition.

Letter(s) of recommendation.

Self-addressed, stamped postcard, which will be used to acknowledge receipt of the application packet.

Mail completed packets to: Glenn Nobles • 2605 Sierra Circle • Hattiesburg, MS 39402

Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award Application Form 2009-2010

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade at Time of Application \_\_\_\_\_

School Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Nominating Student \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Nominee \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_


**Release Form:** I hereby give the National Association for Gifted Children permission to use my child's photo\* and composition, submitted in connection with the NAGC Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award, in any publicity or announcements NAGC may make about the award or the award winners, should my child be selected for the award. I further grant permission to NAGC to use my child's name, school name, and city/state in any publicity or announcements that uses his/her photo or composition, and to make edits to the length of the composition as may be necessary. I understand that neither my child nor I will receive any remuneration in connection with this permission and understand that the photo and the composition will not be returned to me.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

\*NAGC will request a photo of the award winners for use in award publicity and announcements. Do not send a photo with the application packet.



To download  
an applica-  
tion for the  
Frances A.  
Karnes  
Excellence in  
Education  
Award, please  
go to the  
MAGC web-  
site:

[www.magcweb.org](http://www.magcweb.org)



## International Handbook on Giftedness

Dr. Frances A. Karnes, Distinguished Professor in Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education and Director of the Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi and Dr. Kristen Stephens, Assistant Professor of the Practice Program in Education at Duke University, have co-authored a chapter in the International Handbook on Giftedness. The chapter, *Legal and the Gifted*, focuses on many areas involved in mediation, due process, and court cases within gifted education.

## Leadership for Students: A Guide for Young Leaders

Dr. Frances A. Karnes, Distinguished Professor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi, and Dr. Suzanne Bean, Emeritus Professor of Education at Mississippi University for Women, have revised their book on leadership. The second edition of *Leadership for Students: A Guide for Young Leaders* explodes with positive ideas and activities that will help your students discover their leadership abilities. The activities throughout this book stimulate the exploration of ideas and encourage critical thinking about leadership. Students will find guidance and advice that emphasize leadership skills in a variety of settings, including leadership in the classroom, social activities, and the community. The text also includes real-life stories on how students took on leadership positions.

The book includes a Leadership Action Journal that allows students to record their thoughts and actions as they develop their leadership skills. Exciting learning activities are included like conducting a survey on the characteristics of being a good leader, organizing a debate on leadership, interviewing community leaders, and developing and implementing a plan for becoming a leader.

## Assessment of Gifted Children

Dr. Frances A. Karnes, Distinguished Professor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi, and Dr. Suzanne Bean, Emeritus Professor of Education at Mississippi University for Women, have recently had a book published on assessment in gifted education. The book, *Assessment Tools for Gifted Children: Screening, Identification, and Evaluation*, is an essential reference for all professionals working in gifted education. Of particular interest are those instruments that assess students in academic, intellectual, creative, artistic, and leadership domains. This book includes information on norming data, technical data, appropriateness for use with gifted and talented students, and publication information within a comprehensive inventory of relevant information for each test profiled. The book is available through Love Publishing.

## 2010 SUMMER PROGRAMS

### LEADERSHIP STUDIES PROGRAM

JUNE 13 – 18, 2010

The Leadership Studies Program, a one-week residential program, is designed for students in grades six through 11, who have a desire to develop and enhance their leadership abilities. Students will be housed in dormitories on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Tuition includes room, board, recreational activities, and limited accident insurance. **Leadership I** is a program with specific emphasis on leadership skills. Training will include those areas necessary for leadership development: fundamentals of leadership, written and oral communication, group dynamics, problem solving, planning, personal skills, and decision making. Avenues for becoming leaders in the schools, communities, and religious affiliations will be utilized to heighten the awareness and development of leadership potential. **Leadership II** is a continuation of the program, with Leadership I as a prerequisite for entry. It is an intense study to further develop leadership concepts and qualities. Emphasis is placed on the psychology of leadership, assertiveness training, and situational leadership. **Leadership III** is an extension of the program, with Leadership II as a prerequisite for entry. Training will focus on the legal aspects of leadership, responsibilities of various positions of leadership, developing personal power, and leadership for the future. The students also have the opportunity for informal interaction with adult leaders. Financial aid is available based on need, on a limited basis.

### SUMMER GIFTED STUDIES PROGRAM

JUNE 20 – 25, 2010

The Summer Gifted Studies Program, a one-week residential program, is designed for intellectually gifted students in grades four through eight with intelligence quotients of 120 or above on an individually administered test or the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above at the national level on an achievement test. The program enhances the cognitive abilities of gifted students through planned enrichment/acceleration activities. Content areas are combined with processing skills to enable students to explore a wide variety of topics. Students will be housed in dormitories on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Instructional activities will be conducted in classrooms and laboratories on the campus. Recreational activities and cultural events will be included, based upon availability. Tuition includes room, board, recreational and cultural activities, and limited accident insurance. Financial aid is available based on need, on a limited basis.

### SUMMER PROGRAM FOR ACADEMICALLY TALENTED YOUTH

JULY 4– 23, 2010

The Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth, a three-week residential program, is designed for students in grades seven through 10 who qualify based on SAT or ACT results. A variety of intensive, fast-paced courses will be offered, such as mathematics, including Algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, calculus and modern analysis; physics; human anatomy/physiology; marine biology; forensic science; polymer science; political science; psychology; criminal justice; creative writing; and debate. The program is designed to include appropriate academic, cultural, and recreational experiences. The University of Southern Mississippi offers the program through cooperative efforts with the Duke University Talent Identification Program. Tuition includes the instructional program, books, room and board, recreational activities, and limited accident insurance. Financial aid is available based on need, on a limited basis.

### The Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted

The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies hosts *The Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted* from 8 a.m.- 3:45 pm., Friday, March 5, 2010, at the R.C. Cook Union on the Hattiesburg campus of The University of Southern Mississippi. The keynote speaker this year will be Dr. Kristen Stephens, Assistant Professor of the Practice, Program in Education, Duke University, who will present "Digital Storytelling: Narratives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Dr. Stephens will also offer another presentation later in the program called "Product Development by Gifted Students."

In addition, Dr. Sandee Manning, Assistant Professor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi, will present "When Gifted Students Underachieve;" Carol Paola, Executive Director, Mississippi Association for Gifted Children, will present "Parent Advocacy for Gifted Education;" and Chauncey Spears, Education, will present "Gifted Education in Mississippi." Advanced Learning/Gifted Programs Division Director, Office of Curriculum & Instruction, Mississippi Department of

Following the presentations will be Time for Sharing, in which teachers of the gifted share materials, mini-units, activities, ideas, and products that they have used successfully in the classroom. The conference is offered at no charge to the participants. CEUs are available for \$20.

To register for the conference, please contact The Frances A. Karnes for Gifted Studies at 601-266-5236 or visit our website at [www.usm.edu/gifted](http://www.usm.edu/gifted). Registration deadline is February 26, 2010.

# P r o g r a m s

For more information  
on programs at the  
Frances A. Karnes  
Center for Gifted  
Studies, call 601-  
266-5236, or visit  
their website at  
[www.usm.edu/gifted](http://www.usm.edu/gifted)

**Mississippi Association for Gifted Children**  
Elizabeth Mosley Memorial Student Scholarships

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Prior MAGC scholarship recipients are not eligible for nomination.)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Choice: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must be a Mississippi program)

Total Cost of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Teacher Telephone Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
(This number will only be used should there be questions concerning this nomination.)

Signature of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominating Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

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**To the Nominating Teacher:**

**The following information MUST be included with the nomination form. Incomplete nomination packets will not be considered.**

- A narrative describing student's special interests, school and community involvement, honors, and your reasons for nominating this student; indicate a financial need.
- A copy of the student's G.P.P. D.S. verifying eligibility.
- A narrative from the student stating his/her areas of interest and reasons for choosing the program for which he/she is being nominated.
- A completed copy of the student's official application for the program which includes program fees and details.
- Additional letters of support may be included.

**Please mail completed nomination packet to:**  
Glenn Nobles • 2605 Sierra Circle • Hattiesburg, MS 39402  
*Thank you for taking advantage of this opportunity for your students.*

## An Editorial: A Blast from the Past

In the early 1990s the Mississippi Association for Gifted Children fought the good fight to protect gifted education for our Mississippi public school gifted children, securing a funded mandate for gifted education in grades two through six. Over time, gifted programming was strengthened, gifted outcomes were required, the MDE support grew, and the community that advocates for gifted children became convinced that excellence in education for gifted children was a valued part of the curriculum in Mississippi.

Then, with the implementation of No Child Left Behind a new realization surfaced. Regular education teachers would no longer be encouraged and supported when compacting the curriculum for their gifted and high-end learners. Accelerated classes ended. Heterogeneous grouping was required, regardless of research findings of the impact of heterogeneous grouping on gifted children, and the fact that it was not an illegal learning opportunity. All students would be spoon-fed the skills tested on the Mississippi Criterion Test. It mattered not that many of our students needed more complex, in-depth learning opportunities. Nor did it matter that without pre-testing our students, many would sit through unnecessary instruction, resulting in boredom. Boredom has caused some of our most able learners to tune-out and make little or no effort to do well on the state test.

While intellectually gifted children may not be superior in every content area, in those areas where they do excel, the lack of challenge results in those students being left behind. These are the students who may actually learn nothing new in the school day. Sometimes they are given more of the same to do, aka busywork, or they are used as tutors for students who need assistance. Under such circumstances, and I believe they exist in every district across the state; the gifted education program has become more critical than ever.

It is in the gifted class that our gifted children have the opportunities to work in areas of interest, to work above-level, and experience problem solving and creativity independently and in small groups with students of like ability. Gifted students need only one to three repetitions. Imagine being in a classroom where some classmates need fifty to a hundred repetitions presented in multiple ways. Being able to escape this situation for five hours a week in gifted class is not nearly the answer for educating our gifted children, but it is one outlet that has relieved these students from the boredom that is quietly absorbing their love for learning and challenge.

Now, as we face the challenges of budget deficits, we also face the realization that the educational community is not concerned about educating the gifted child. Evidently, based on recent advisories from gifted advocates, gifted children are the ones who will pay the bill. The budget can be less deficient by taking away the five hours a week that gifted children experience high-end learning opportunities. This solution to the budget crunch is apparently simple enough. Remove challenging learning opportunities from the regular classroom, teaching only what will be on the state test. Then remove challenging programming through the gifted program. Lessen the budget deficit by leaving gifted children with mundane educational opportunities. When we force gifted children to help lessen the budget deficit, we can be *certain* that gifted children have little or no academic challenge. Does this make sense financially or educationally? Can we even suppose the leaders who will be responsible for ending gifted education have given the repercussions of their actions any thought?

If they end the gifted education program, these decision makers will have removed the fertile ground for high achievement. Consequently, imagine all of the competitive students we will no longer provide to compete for scholarships and seats in prestigious colleges and universities. No longer will we set the standard for these children at a high level and encourage them to excel in their areas of strengths and interests. We will just ignore them and their needs. Two cents of every one hundred dollars spent on education in the United States goes to gifted children. Will we be relieved that Mississippi will no longer be contributing to *that* two cents!

Can we pride ourselves in wasting the talent and ability of our gifted children to lessen the budget deficit? Might we wonder about the Chinese educational changes? That culture is beginning to focus more on problem solving and creativity than on rote, unrelated, unconnected learning. Perplexing. Why would the Chinese want what we are throwing away when we end gifted learning opportunities for our gifted children?

If it comes to pass that funding for gifted education is taken away to help balance a budget that these children certainly had no part in putting in the red, then we will have only ourselves to thank when we look for the best surgeon, the best attorney, the best teachers, the best accountants, the best architects, the best scientists.....We can simply go out of state, maybe to Florida where they have gifted center schools, or maybe to Texas where curriculum compacting is being required, or maybe to Virginia where there are gifted resource classes, gifted schools within a school, *and* gifted centers. To meet our needs, we can just look for places where the state valued able learners and provided appropriate educational opportunities for them. We will not worry that we are not producing our own high achieving population. After all, that money was needed to help balance the state budget.

Is cutting out the gifted programming in our state to help balance the budget a pathetic and unwarranted waste of our children's ability that will actually have little or no impact on the budget deficit? What a sad state of education exists in Mississippi public education when *everyone* is limited to learning what the weakest learners can learn. We are about to revisit an educational past that was inadequate...a blast from the past that will not meet the needs of our bright youngsters today any more than it did so long ago. Consider that Mississippi's fourth grade reading scores *on the state test* ranked first in the nation, yet, on the national test these same Mississippi fourth grade scores ranked *last* in the nation. This is deception at its best. Consider a national curriculum is just around the corner. How short-sighted can our leaders be?

*A Nation Deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students* reported, among other recommendations, in 2004, that *acceleration* is needed to educate our bright youngsters. The report is on line and provides 18 types of acceleration that are neither expensive nor difficult to implement. We have seen this national report basically ignored in Mississippi. Now, our gifted children may be expected to achieve without *any* form of support. This is illogical, unreasonable, unfair, and certainly short-sighted.

Hopefully, I am *wrong*, and the educational community and the Mississippi Legislature will *step-up and fund* the gifted program or use the certified gifted teachers and National Board certified teachers to implement truly accelerated classes for these children, as in a gifted school within a school! Absent this, serious apologies to our Mississippi gifted children and their parents will be in order for the unfair and inadequate public school educational opportunities our gifted children will face.

~Linda Mucha (Past-President of MAGC)



Mississippi First Lego League competition



Mission Eggcellence Project, Mississippi State

*If you have news that you would like to have included in our next issue of Concepts, please e-mail Deborah Holt at: [deboraholt@aol.com](mailto:deboraholt@aol.com) Deadline for Summer Issue news: April 20, 2010*

## Mississippi FLL Robotics Competition

The Mississippi First Lego League Robotics competition was held on Saturday, January 30, 2010, at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Jackson County Campus. Several gifted classes from throughout the state participated and brought home awards. The Short Circuits from Harper McCaughan Elementary, students of Karen Leitenberger, brought home the Against All Odds Award. Emma Cornwall's team, Olympic SPIRIT, from Lee Middle School in Columbus, MS, won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Project Award. The First Timers from Neshoba Central Elementary in Philadelphia, MS, students of Gloria Seward, won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Project Award. The Rising Star Award went to The Mini-Crashers of Delisle Elementary in Pass Christian, MS, students of Stacey Meyer. Congrats to all these schools and to all who participated in this extremely valuable project.

## Gifted Students are Eggcellent in Competition

The Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems at Mississippi State University held a Mission Eggcellence Project to teach students about the physics behind car crashes on Saturday, January 9th, 2010, at the Starkville campus. Students in kindergarten through sixth grade competed in multiple races to see whose passenger (a raw egg) survived the longest uninjured. The test ramp's incline was gradually increased until the winner was determined.

Students built "cars" and bumpers from kits provided to their teachers at a workshop in the fall. The Mission Eggcellence Project serves to teach students about physics and mathematics through experimental applications in preventing passenger injury in car crashes. "We're just trying to communicate the issues of safety related to car crashes," said Dr. Mark Horstemeyer, mechanical engineering professor and CAVS chair. Students specifically focused on either bumper or seat belt design in the competitions. Automotive bumper construction and passenger restraint construction are the real world applications used to demonstrate the physics concepts. In the fall, teachers from around the state, including Gina Hall, Alpha gifted teacher with the Newton Municipal School District, participated in a teacher workshop held at CAVS. Attending teachers received instructions for eight custom-designed experiments demonstrating math and physics concepts and experiment materials for a class of up to 30 students. Teachers taught their students physics and math concepts and then students competed in school competitions. The winners competed in the CAVS competition.

Two of Ms. Hall's second grade gifted students, J.D. West and Alexis Wolf attended the competition. The group, also named "Speed Racers" placed 2nd in the competition. They received t-shirts, a certificate, a book bag, and \$15 gift cards to Barnes and Noble.

## Desoto County Chess Tournament

Sixth grade gifted students of Bonnie Crabtree won the Desoto County Chess Tournament, which was held in November, 2009. Three members of the 6th grade chess team also won 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for top 6th grade players in the county. These students are involved in the Spotlight gifted program at Desoto Central Middle School.

## Students Create Books to Raise Money

On May 15, 2009, the gifted students (GEMS) of Belmont School partnered with the Tupelo Books-A-Million Store to raise money for the elementary library. The students, 2nd through 6th grades with Mrs. Cathy Eaton (teacher of the Gifted), had completed an extensive unit on Ancient Greece culminating in writing their own original myths with the Olympian gods and goddesses as the characters. These myths were formatted into pop-up books which Books-A-Million displayed the week of May 24th, designating the students the featured "Childrens' Artists of the Week." The books included original cover and action-scene artwork along with the written myth.

For every purchase during the book fair, 10% went towards the Belmont Elementary Library. The morning of May 15th was spent at Books-A-Million as a field trip which included many parents and grandparents as well. The Belmont gifted students were interviewed by the Daily Journal and appeared on the WTVA News that evening. The Daily Journal wrote a wonderful article about the students that appeared in the May 17th Sunday paper. The students completed their field trip at Vanelli's Restaurant with a special Greek luncheon prepared just for them.

This was a fantastic learning experience where the students were able to showcase their work that directly affected their community and school.

## Accent Students in Clinton Have a Heart

Tracy Freeman's 47 ACCENT students (Clinton's Gifted Program), held the first "Chalk It Up for St. Jude" Sidewalk Art Contest on Friday, November 13, 2009, to support Ali Mason, a fellow gifted student. Ali has astrocytoma, which is a brain tumor. These students planned and implemented a contest which had many purposes, but the main one was to show support and love to Ali and her family. The students exhibited many leadership skills throughout the implementation of this project which began in Tracy's classroom reached out to the entire state. The day of the contest the students chose sidewalk chalk to showcase their ideas of "Hopes and Dreams" which was chosen by Ali. Students were able to make donations for Ali to take to her next visit to St. Jude's Hospital from the students at Eastside Elementary School. The Governor's wife, Marsha Barbour, presented a message on the front lawn of the school to the student body.

Accent students will also be raising additional money for St. Jude by selling "Ali's Army" t-shirts - Peace Love Ali - St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for \$10 with \$6 of each shirt being donated to the hospital. In the past two weeks, they have sold about 150 shirts, which will provide \$900 for St. Jude. In addition, they have involved their school in collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House at St. Jude. In the past two weeks, they have collected seven pounds which brings in 35 - 45 cents per pound.

What a meaningful leadership opportunity for the Accent students in Clinton!



Cathy Eaton's students share books they created at Books-A-Million



Students of Cathy Eaton have their books on display at Books-A-Million in Tupelo.



Students of Cathy Eaton share a Greek lunch after creating books on Greek gods and goddesses.



Contact Nancy

Loome at:

[nloome@msparentscampaign.org](mailto:nloome@msparentscampaign.org)

to receive regular updates on what is happening with funding and initiatives in Jackson.

Thanks to the Parents Campaign for being the eyes and ears for all of us!

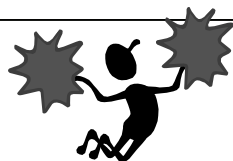


## Legislative Coffee in February

This month, MAGC will be hosting a “Coffee Break” in the Capitol Rotunda on Thursday Feb. 25 from 9:30 – 11:00. Clinton Association for Gifted Children will be one of the hosts at this coffee. We are seeking additional affiliate groups to be hosts as well. Coffee

and sweet rolls will be provided. We’d love to have representatives from all over the state! In March, we will visit legislators in a “Graceful Face to Face”. During this event, we hope to have students and parents visit their legislators to deliver thanks and a

homemade treat. Throughout this effort, we must remain positive and grateful. Please do not express negative thoughts to anyone other than yourself. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do in the name of gifted children in our state! **Trm**



## Tips for Legislators

- If you attended the legislative brunch, please write a note of thanks to Sen. David Blount for his unsolicited graciousness to us.
- Write a positive “letter to the editor” of your local newspaper. Encourage some of your parents to do the same.
- If your students write letters to their legislators, make sure they are grammatically correct.
- Invite your legislator to your classroom to explain how a bill becomes a law, etc. Have one of your students interview your legislator while another student is making a video. Or, video a PSA about your legislator and all the great things he has done. Make sure your students have researched the aspects of your legislators’ activities and efforts in the legislature.
- Send a Valentine’s Day card to your legislator OR the governor OR Johnny Franklin (Gov. Barbour’s Education Policy Advisor)

*This summer we will hold a one-day legislative committee training retreat. During that time, we will further develop a plan that will be implemented throughout the entire year. If you are still interested in serving on the legislative committee, email [trmosley1@yahoo.com](mailto:trmosley1@yahoo.com). We were unable to get organized this year but we will be ready to hit the ground running next year! I’m looking forward to it! Thank you all for your patience with me!*

*~Teresa Mosley, MAGC Legislative Chair*

## 2010 Legislative Brunch Held in Capitol Rotunda



Dr Frances Karnes speaking with a legislator during the MAGC 2010 Legislative Brunch on January 14, 2010.

On Thursday January 14, in the midst of the Jackson “water crisis”, MAGC hosted a brunch in honor and appreciation of the Mississippi Legislators as they begin the 2010 session. The event was catered by Magnolia Caterer’s of Clinton, who prepared a beautiful table of southern foods for over 500 people. Among those in attendance were MAGC board members, members, and parents representing Jackson Association for Gifted Children, and other areas of the state. Sen. David Blount surprised the members by obtaining permission for them to be seated in the gallery! Sen. Blount was accompanied by his daughter, Susannah, who is a gifted student at McWillie Elementary in Jackson. While in the gallery, Sen. Blount introduced the group, particularly our wonderful president, Sherry Willis! If you weren’t able to attend, you missed a treat. For more on upcoming legislative events and tips, go to page 12. ~TRM



### Renew Your Membership in MAGC!

It is time again for members to renew their MAGC Membership. Not only does membership in MAGC help provide the services listed below, but a strong membership is vital when lobbying for the rights of the gifted in Mississippi. Please take a few minutes and renew today!

MAGC provides...

An annual conference for teachers and families of gifted children

Student scholarships and teacher grants

Workshops and training for parents and teachers

Opportunities for teachers and parents to network and form support groups

Assistance to local parent affiliate groups

Publications for teachers and families of gifted children

\$25 pays for membership through Sept. 30, 2010

Visit the MAGC web-site to download an application!

[www.magcweb.org](http://www.magcweb.org)

## *MAGC Parent*

### *Affiliate Groups:*

- \*Clinton Association of Gifted Children
- \*Columbia's PAGE
- \*ECTAG (including Leake, Scott, Newton)
- \*Harrison County
- \*Hattiesburg
- \*Jackson Association for Gifted Children (Hinds County)
- \*Lamar County
- \*Long Beach Association
- \*McComb Association
- \*Neshoba County TAG
- \*New Hope Merit
- \*Parachute (Jefferson Davis School District)
- \*Pass Christian Parent Group
- \*Petal Parent Group
- \*Senatobia Gifted Parent Advocacy
- \*South Pike GT Parent Group
- \*Venture Parent Organization
- \*Yazoo County

## **MAGC Parent Affiliate Groups**

We would love to hear from you if you have any ideas or questions regarding Parent Affiliates. please contact:

Yoluanda Brown at [yoluanda@yahoo.com](mailto:yoluanda@yahoo.com) or Kay Williams at [kay622@bellsouth.net](mailto:kay622@bellsouth.net)

Remember, there is no fee for a Parent Affiliate group to register. But it is important for everyone to become a member of MAGC. Membership allows MAGC to continue to advocate and stand up for gifted children in MS as well as support gifted scholarships for children and teachers. Membership costs \$25 per year.

You may download a Parent Affiliate registration form at [magcweb.org](http://magcweb.org) and send it to the address below.

Yoluanda Brown  
1122 Avon Way  
Jackson, MS 39206

## **Math Competition Open to all Gifted Students**

Noetic Learning's math contest will be held on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The contest is for students from grades 2 to 5, and is open to all schools!

Each test consists of 20 problem solving questions. The problems that you'll find in the Noetic Learning Math Contest are grade-appropriate. No problems require special math concepts beyond what's learned at school. However, some problems will require advanced problem solving skills.

A team leader from the school will administer the test at his/her school. The test results will be evaluated nationally and the students with the 10 best scores in each grade level will be recognized on our web site

For more information, visit <http://www.noetic-learning.com/mathcontest>

MAGC 2010 Annual Conference

Imperial Palace – Biloxi, MS

**2010 MAGC CONFERENCE PROPOSAL**

*MAGC's Annual Conference will be held September 29 – October 1, 2010*

*at the Imperial Palace, Biloxi, MS.*

Share your creative ideas with teachers from across our state! Send in your session proposals on topics ranging from curriculum to parent support. We especially want to encourage sessions on:

- advocating for gifted education programs
- ideas for incorporating the fine arts
- evidence of the positive impact of gifted education programs

**Proposals are also being accepted for the Pre-Conference Workshops on Wednesday, September 29 for counselors and psychometrists.**

Completed proposals must be **e-mailed** no later than **June 15, 2010**. Notification to the main presenter will be made no later than July 15, 2010. Note that the conference registration fee will be waived for only **the main** presenter of the session. Please print or type information below:

**Main Presenter Name:**

**Institution /Affiliation:**

**Position/Job Title:**

**Home Address:**

**E-mail:**

**Telephone:**

**Co-Presenter:**

**Title of presentation:**

Typed abstract (75 words or less) of the session as it will appear in the conference program.

**CATEGORY for PRESENTATION**

**Intended AUDIENCE for PRESENTATION**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social/emotional needs of gifted students  | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Teachers              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiating curriculum and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School Teachers           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity and/or the arts                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Teachers               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating student progress                | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents of Gifted Children       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special populations                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrators and/or counselors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychometrists/Examiners         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted Eligibility Process                 |   |

Email form as an attachment to: [sandra.manning@usm.edu](mailto:sandra.manning@usm.edu) or mail form to: Dr. Sandra Manning, 166 Jeff Byrd Road, Laurel, MS 39443

\*\*\*Photocopy and distribute this form as needed.\*\*\*



*Announcing the return of the MAGC conference to the Mississippi Gulf Coast!!*

*MAGC Conference  
2010  
September 29-  
October 1  
Biloxi, Mississippi*

*Keynote Speaker: Dr. Joseph Renzulli*

Look for lodging information in our summer issue of Concepts!



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