

LOUISIANA SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2009

President's Message from Charlotte Bihm



Greetings LSTA Members,

What a fantastic job so many of you did in making the NSTA New Orleans experience one of the best yet! LSTA is grateful for your countless hours of volunteer work prior to and during the event and positive attitudes through the laboring tasks that many of you undertook. We certainly could not have accomplished what we did without your help and that of countless volunteers from the local area and across the state. We would like to again thank our LSTA leaders who worked tirelessly over the last 18 months in preparation for NSTA's presence in our state: Conference Chair Jean May-Brett, Program Coordinator Brenda Nixon, and Local Arrangements Chair Paul Johnson. Through their leadership, the conference was truly extraordinary! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

We were thrilled to have had many fantastic guest speakers and presenters in our state, including U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan. In case you missed his speech, a transcript is available on the U.S. Department of Education's website at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/03/03202009.html> .

In conjunction with the conference, several LSTA members were recognized for national and state level awards. I hope that you enjoy reading about their accomplishments in this edition of the LASER. The sponsors for our LSTA Awards ceremony were Ron Reschke of Fisher Scientific, and Brenda Collins of McGraw-Hill School Solutions, Macmillan McGraw-Hill and Glencoe McGraw-Hill. We are sincerely grateful for their support. We also are appreciative of Tom Avery of Sargent-Welch, Wards, and Science Kit for covering the safety requirements during the Student Science Assembly.

As we prepare for the upcoming LATM/LSTA joint conference, we ask you to consider submitting a proposal to present or volunteering to assist in another capacity. **Our program committee has set up a link to allow for online submission of proposals. Please be sure that you or any presenters you recruit go to the LSTA website <http://www.lsta.info> and click on the session proposal link provided on the homepage. Help make this year's joint science and math conference an outstanding event by participating.** It is your sharing of innovative ideas and willingness to go the extra mile for science education that keeps LSTA a positive educational organization in Louisiana. Thanks for all that you do.

As summer is creeping in, Shannon Lafont and I are making plans to attend the Summer Congress on Science Education as representatives of the association and our members. We will provide you with a report in an upcoming edition of the LASER. Have a pleasant end to your 2008-2009 school year and a great start of summer.

Charlotte Bihm

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LASER Subscription Updates

Are you receiving electronic copies of the LASER? You should be!

If you are not receiving the copy we need your email address, or what we have on file needs to be corrected.

Remember that the LASER will become an electronic only copy following the joint LSTA/LATM Conference in Shreveport this Fall. Don't miss out on your copy – take a minute to verify your email.

Changes can be made using the form on the back page of this issue of the LASER, or by filling out the membership form located on the LSTA web site at <http://www.lsta.info/membership.htm>.

Send completed form to:

Paul Johnson, Terrebonne Parish School Board, P.O. Box 5097, Houma, LA 70361

Conference Highlights

NSTA + K-12 Students = Learning + FUN

Did you know that there were many programs and events for New Orleans metro area students during NSTA? We don't often find a national conference for adults reaching out to children!

Featured presenters and others made science come alive! **Philippe Cousteau** brought his passion and love of the ocean to **Sister Noel** and her students at Benjamin Banneker. **First Lady Supriya Jindal** and **Sally Ride** visited the A.P. Tureaud Technology Academy ES ("Recovery School District" of New Orleans) to inspire students to recognize the importance of science education. In addition there was a student "pre-test pep rally" performed by Tyraine "Grand Hank" Ragsdale and attended by over 800 Region 1 schools!



First Lady Supriya Jindal speaks to students about science education.



Teachers get instruction from the Labranche Wetland Watchers.

We don't want to leave out our wonderful Student Guides! They provided an incredible array of services, from assembling the program packets to working on the floor directing participants to their locations. What a treat it was to see them in their lab coats ready to take on any task they were given! Sincere thanks to Guide Managers **Jean Pinney** and **Sean Hudson** for working with **Verne Isbell** to have Delta Education provide these wonderful lab coats.

But wait, students were also at center stage when field trip participants visited the LaBranche Wetland Watchers and their teacher **Barry Guillot**. The students are the ones who provided the instruction! Those unable to take the field trip with the Wetland Watchers can get a glimpse of their work by visiting: http://videos.nola.com/times-picayune/2009/03/labranche_wetland_watchers_par.html

Surely, as a result of these kinds of rich experiences, there will be many young people thinking that being a scientist is pretty cool!

New Orleans Rolled out the Red Carpet for NSTA

March 19-22, 2009 was a euphoric time in New Orleans! Everyone, including the NOLA natives, visiting NSTA attendees, the wait staff, bus drivers, and the list goes on and on, was gracious and welcoming, including NOLA natives. To say it was euphoric is truly an understatement. People went way out of their way to help others. From the moment of arrival, the weather was sunny, warm and picture perfect and the environment clean and friendly. People from all over the world met a New Orleans that was well on its way back to its original glory.

The volunteers, field trips, special presentations and events, exhibits, and sessions were simply outstanding throughout the entire conference. People were frequently overheard saying that this was the best conference they had ever attended, with one adding "that was worth something" since he had attended most of them! In fact, a dear friend of Louisiana, **Dr. Fred Johnson**, who won the coveted Robert H. Carleton Award this year announced, "This NSTA was the best I have ever attended and it had the most diversity."

As Louisianans, we can be proud of our state and what has been accomplished, especially since Katrina and Rita. The state is stepping up and stepping out and all of us play a big part in that transformation. Our next big event is right around the corner! The joint LSTA/LATM Conference will bring all of us together once again, so hang on to your hats, we're getting' ready!

A Round of Applause Please for Our Volunteers!

There aren't many we can depend upon in a pinch, but make no mistake, the volunteers who spent hours helping to make this the best conference ever went above and beyond the call of duty! There were literally hundreds of LSTA members and their families who worked for hours throughout the conference. If you were a volunteer at NSTA, take a bow! You had a yeoman's job and you completed it with grace and finesse! THANK YOU ,THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Also, never in the history of NSTA has so many local community groups volunteered to work at the conference. A big round of thanks to the community groups that volunteered at the conference!

- Junior League of New Orleans
- Women for a Better Louisiana
- Isidore Newman School Parents Association
- National Council of Jewish Women
- Sigma Alpha Kappa fraternity of Loyola University
- Pre-service science teachers from UNO (under the guidance of Professor Ivan Gill)

Michael DiSpezio—Always a Friend to Louisiana

LSTA salutes Michael DiSpezio...consummate scientist, educator and friend to Louisiana! Michael has always held Louisiana close to his heart, giving of himself and his talents whenever possible. During the week before NSTA began, Michael came in early to provide science presentations to children in New Orleans! They were THRILLED with his razzle-dazzle, science is FUN and EXCITING presentations—and he ALWAYS had a message for them! Stay in school, study hard and you can be whatever you WANT to be in life! He shared that he is the son of immigrants who had not even finished high school, and he was the first to attend college in his family. The children welcomed him



and his message! Michael made a lasting impression on many of the children! THANKS Michael for thinking of Louisiana—you know you are very special to us!



~ Memorable Quotes from the Conference ~

"It is soooo moist and moldy here." ~ Teacher from Maryland

"If hurricanes are so terrible and cause all this damage, then why do you stay here? Why don't you just move to another state?" ~ Teacher from Vermont

"This place has a lot of character. I can feel its vibe." ~Teacher from New York

"I'm not big on spicy foods, fried foods or shellfish. So where can we go eat?" ~ Educator from Illinois

"So, why can't all that sediment from the Mississippi be used to fill in the holes instead of dumping out into the Gulf of Mexico where it is wasted?" ~Student from Pennsylvania in New Orleans on Spring break helping rebuild a home in the ninth ward.

The conference was wonderful. I really learned a lot. Learned how and why proteins fold and the damage these malformed proteins can do. Went on a 4 hour air-boat ride – caught and alligator and put him in the boat; held and fed alligators at the "Instagators" alligator farm. Observed how alligators are sexed. Won a cat and removed its pelt to prepare for dissection. Dissected brains, kidneys, and hearts. There were many other things I learned, and although my feet hurt, I loved it. ~ **Sue Hinchee**, Calcasieu Parish teacher

The conference was absolutely amazing! I loved every minute of it. I attended workshops from 8:00 a.m. to 5 or 6:00 p.m. every day, except Sunday from 8 to noon. I was in the exhibit hall or a workshop all day long. I missed lunch because of all the interesting things going on around noon. Of course, I ate very well each night. I dissected my first rabbit, made a necklace with my own DNA, and I had Madagascar cockroaches crawl on my hands. I left the conference with samples of 10 different protozoans and other microscopic organisms, which I hope survived the trip for a scope lab tomorrow. I heard Bill Nye speak. I met Ann Wilson when I volunteered to help at the Registration Desk. ~ **Annette DesOrmeaux**, Calcasieu Parish teacher



LSUA pre-service teachers presented a workshop during the National Science Teachers Association national conference in New Orleans on March 22, 2009. The workshop, titled "All I Ever Needed to Know About Science I learned in Kindergarten", focused on inquiry oriented lessons for elementary students. **Aimee Couvillion, Whitney Estis, Kayla Jeansonne, Kimberly LaPrairie, Brandy Roberts, Melissa Soileau, Emily Welch** and **Nikki Voinche** chose physical science topics such as simple machines and plate tectonics as content for their lessons. According to LSUA Assistant Professor **Elaine Beck**, physical science topics were chosen because elementary teachers often feel like they lack content knowledge in these areas and therefore they do not teach these topics. The approach for each lesson followed the learning cycle format which allows elementary students to explore the topic through experiments using household items before being introduced to vocabulary and principles related to the topic. Direct application to everyday life is stressed in each lesson. By using this discovery process students retain the content taught. Forty three elementary teachers from four countries and ten states attended the workshop. Overall, the workshop was a huge success and the students were personally invited back as presenters by the co-director of the NSTA conference.

News from the Louisiana Department of Education

First of all, I wish to commend all LSTA members who served as committee chairs or as volunteers at the NSTA National Conference in New Orleans in March. You were wonderful and did a fantastic job. I can't tell you how many representatives from other states commented on how friendly and helpful the conference volunteers were.

The latest information from the Department of Education (DOE) is that committees have been selected for the Standards Revision Program occurring this year. The revision process will continue throughout this year. It will be spring of 2010 before the new standards and Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) will be available online. Implementation will not occur until after a revised curriculum has been developed. Do not expect to implement the new standards and GLEs for any content area until the 2011-2012 school year.

If you are interested in how Louisiana's current science standards align to the *NAEP 2009: Science Standards*, you can review the NAEP's standards found in the alignment study conducted by REL Southwest at the following website: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=76&productID=44>.

In case you are interested, DOE will soon offer training in literacy and numeracy. The 2009 Literacy and Numeracy Conference will be held April 28-May 1, 2009, at the River Center in Baton Rouge. The first three days are focused on Literacy with the final day focusing on Numeracy. The Department would like to have more middle and high school teachers attend. With the greater emphasis on literacy at all levels, we wish to encourage your attendance. Please note that there is no on-site registration. Participants can register through *Coursewhere* at <https://www.solutionwhere.com/ldoe/cw/showconference.asp?1447>.

*Ann Wilson, Science Coordinator
Louisiana Department of Education*

Congrats

LSTA Recognizes Outstanding Educators

The Pisces Room at the Aquarium of the Americas was the setting for the 2009 LSTA General Meeting and Awards Breakfast. Held in conjunction with the NSTA Conference in New Orleans, attendees were treated to breakfast courtesy of Fisher Science Education, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and Aquarium of the Americas. The awards were sponsored in part by McGraw-Hill School Solutions, Macmillan McGraw-Hill, Glencoe McGraw-Hill, and the Louisiana Earth Science Teachers Association. The honorees are listed below.

The Essie Beck "Rising Star" Science Education Award

Emily Compton
Park Forest Middle School
Baton Rouge, LA

The LSTA Outstanding Elementary Science Teacher of the Year Award

Robin Amanda Jeffers
Sunset Elementary School
Sunset, LA

The John Dempsey Outstanding Secondary Science Teacher of the Year Award

Chris Brown
South Terrebonne High School
Bourg, LA

The Claudia Fowler Distinguished Service to Science Education Award

Patsye Peebles
Retired Biology Teacher
Baton Rouge, LA

The LSTA Distinguished Informal Science Education Award

Carol Hester
Audubon Zoo
New Orleans, LA

The William Craig Outstanding University Educator Award

Dr. Gary Stringer
University of Louisiana Monroe
Monroe, LA

LSTA Travel Grant

Connie Conner
Reeves High School
Reeves, LA



From Left: Patsye Peebles, Wendy DeMers, Amanda Jeffers, Emily Compton, and Gary Stringer



2009 NSTA/Vernier Technology Award Winner

Congratulations to Chris Campbell, Simsboro School, Simsboro, La for being selected as one of seven winners of the 2009 NSTA/Vernier Technology Award. These science educators were selected as winners by an NSTA-appointed panel of experts for creating innovative data-collection lessons and programs in their classrooms. Winners were formally recognized at the NSTA Awards Banquet held during the 2009 NSTA National Convention in New Orleans. Chris' project will monitor environmental conditions in aquatic tanks and monitor the effects of nano-sized particles on aquatic species.

Two Louisiana High School Seniors Selected for National Youth Science Camp® Honors

Aaron Z. Reyes and Tony H. Tzeng have been selected as two promising young scientific leaders in Louisiana's 2009 high school graduating class. At the invitation of Governor Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, they will participate as delegates in the 46th year of the National Youth Science Camp held near the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia. Aaron Z. Reyes is a graduating senior from Tioga High School and Tony Tzeng will complete his high school studies at Lafayette High School.

Established in 1963 as a part of West Virginia's Centennial Celebration, the National Youth Science Camp is an annual summer forum where two delegates representing each state exchange ideas with leading scientists and other professionals from academic and corporate worlds.

Workshop Highlights

LUMCON and From H-2-O Workshop

For many people the day of January 23rd was probably an ordinary Friday. This was certainly not the case for 27 educators from across Louisiana. On this particular Friday these 27 educators made their way to Cocodrie for this year's **From H-2-O** water quality workshop. **From H-2-O** is designed to train teachers how to use Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium's (LUMCON) BayouSide Classroom program at their schools as a way to teach students about water quality issues and stewardship. Because of the short amount of time and the endless amount of material that needed to be covered no time was wasted. Teachers were introduced to BayouSide



Classroom during an introductory session Friday evening and were kept busy until the workshop adjourned Sunday at noon. Even with an agenda, which at best could be described as ambitious, spirits remained high and enthusiasm ran wild the entire weekend. Participants worked together in mentor groups that consisted of one mentor teacher and 2-3 teachers new to the BayouSide Classroom program. By utilizing the mentor's knowledge of sampling techniques and experience using BayouSide Classroom the learning and workshop agenda progressed very rapidly. Everything went as planned. Even the weather was great for the 4-hour cruise aboard LUMCON's R/V Acadiana. The "From H-2-O" organizer, **Murt Conover**, would like to thank all

the participants and workshop guests for their hard work and dedication to water quality, and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) for funding this great experience.

Mercury Workshops



Resources for Understanding and Teaching Evolution (Part 1 of 3)

Developed by Patsye Peebles, 2008 LSTA Claudia Fowler Distinguished Service Awardee

Part One: The Cans and Can'ts of Teaching Evolution (in public schools)

"Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution." You have all seen that statement by Theodosius Dobzhansky. That was the name of the article in The American Biology Teacher in 1973 but the statement that is the most eloquent is this one: *"Seen in the light of evolution, biology is, perhaps, intellectually the most satisfying and inspiring science. Without that light, it becomes a pile of sundry facts some of them interesting or curious, but making no meaningful picture as a whole."* (Am. Biol. Teacher 25:125- 129)

The Cans and Can'ts of Teaching Evolution (in public schools) by Eugenie Scott <http://ncseweb.org/evolution/education/cans-cants-teaching-evolution> "A state, district or school cannot ban evolution, require equal time for creationism, or require a disclaimer on evolution. An individual teacher cannot teach creationism or creation science 'freelance.'" Here is a resource that spells out the legal reasons. So, the next question then is "Why teach evolution?" And here are the answers: <http://ncseweb.org/evolution/why-teach-evolution>

The first step is understanding and teaching the nature of science. This is arguably the most important and basic thing we teach. If students understand this, they will have the tools to analyze a variety of claims for their scientific soundness. Berkeley has developed several wonderful website resources, and the first one is Understanding Science <http://undsci.berkeley.edu/>. To reinforce the ideas with your students, here are three excellent lessons.

- *The Checks* lesson on the nature of science <http://www.indiana.edu/~ensiweb/lessons/chec.lab.html>
- *The Great Fossil Find* lesson on the nature of science <http://www.indiana.edu/~ensiweb/lessons/gr.fs.fd.html>
- *Adventures at Dry Creek* (interactive web version) <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/education/explorations/reslab/newdc/index.html>

** The June issue of the LASER will present part two of this series "Understanding Evolution for Teachers."*

LSTA Regional News

◆ Region I News from Jennifer Williams ◆

Happy Spring! The temperatures are warmer, the flowers are blooming, and science abounds in the Region 1 area. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces from our region at the 2009 NSTA conference in New Orleans. Thank you to everyone from our region, and from around Louisiana, who volunteered their time to help with every aspect of the conference. Your time and enthusiasm helped to make this conference a great success. Thank you!

A highlight of the conference for many metro area science educators was the surprise visit of **Marjorie King**. Marjorie was greeted by several dear friends in the science community from around the country during her Friday and Saturday visits.

We have several Region I LSTA members honored as award winners recently. **Joann Burke** of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation received an Award from the **National Earth Science Teachers Association**. **Carol Hester** of the Audubon Nature Institute's Zoological Gardens was presented the **2009 LSTA Distinguished Informal Science Educator Award**. Carol has worked for many years with teachers and students from all across the state. **Jennifer Williams** of Isidore Newman School in New Orleans. She received the **Zula International-NSTA Early Science Educator Award** during the NSTA conference in March. Jennifer received this award for her wetlands unit that has second and third grade

students at Newman working with the University of New Orleans's Pontchartrain Institute and LSU's Coastal Roots Program. Congratulations to these Region 1 Science Educators.

Julie Cristina of St Mary's Dominican High School received the **2009 Siemens Award** for Advanced Placement for excellence in math and science. This award is presented to one chemistry teacher in each state honoring the achievements of teachers and high schools whose students excel in the College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) math and science exams.

Are you looking for professional development opportunities this spring? Check out the Wet, Wild, & Tree workshop being offered by the Audubon Zoo. On

Saturday, May 23rd, educators have the opportunity to be trained in three exceptional environmental education programs that offering hands-on and minds-on learning. During this workshop teachers will be trained in the Project Learning Tree, Project WILD and Project WET curriculums. The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To learn more about this workshop and to register call 504-212-5378 or email zooschool@auduboninstitute.org.

Remember if you have any news to share about happenings in the Region 1 area, please email me at Jwilliams@newmanschool.org. Happy Spring!

◆ Region II News from Jan Mistich ◆

Whew! What a whirlwind of activities we have experienced since our last LASER was published! The Mercury workshops came to a close in Region 2 with **Debra Carroll** and **Pamela Sanders** at Mandeville Public Works on March 7. Over 30 participants were on hand to learn about the hazards of mercury in our water. Also present to participate in the workshop was **John Rogers** of the LA DEQ Mercury program, who participated in the activities, himself!

Immediately prior to the NSTA Conference, **Kathy Holt** and LIGO held a special presentation for the Council of State Science Supervisors, arranged by **Jean May-Brett** for Sunday night, March 15th. State science program managers from around the country enjoyed a bus ride from New Orleans to Livingston to visit the world class research facility.

Region 2 was well-represented at the conference with presenters and participants. In addition to the many LSTA members from other parishes in Region 2 and MSP participants from the EBR, Central, Livingston, Tangipahoa and Washington school districts, St. Tammany Parish, together with Chevron, made it possible for 18 teachers from the school district to attend with generous travel grants and registration stipends. **Christy Paulsell**, Science Curriculum Specialist, presented a couple of workshops on

science inquiry literacy workstations, and **Heidi Rhea** co-presented a workshop on biomes with inflatables, along with **Breigh Rainey** and **Kristy Scott** from Zachary. These presentations were well-received by teachers from all over the country.

St. Tammany Parish also hosted an NSTA field trip to Mandeville Public Works' constructed wetlands and Environmental Interpretive Program. Twenty-nine educators were greeted by **Mayor Eddie Price**, who shared the vision of the city in establishing an innovative wastewater treatment plant using constructed wetlands and wetlands assimilation. Teachers toured the facility and sampled some of the field trips activities offered to students in the Greater Metropolitan Area on environmental topics. They left, well fed, with a new understanding and greater appreciation of using nature to clean water.

I am proud to be directly involved with Mandeville's educational efforts in providing this conference field trip and others for teachers and students in our area. I know I have just scratched the surface of all the great news that Region 2 has to share. Please drop me a note at Janiece.Mistich@stpsb.org and let me know what you have been doing to make this a memorable Year of Science!



REMINDER! Next LASER Deadline, Saturday, June 6th!
Contact your Regional Representative with your good news!

◆ Region III News from Michelle Morvant ◆

The **Accelerating Children Through Intense Ongoing INstruction Program** that services 6th and 7th graders in Assumption Parish took part in the “Deep Sea Mission” workshop. Participants were engaged through several aquatic experiences. **Phillip Allemond** had the opportunity to ask pondering questions to scientists in the deep submersible Alvin and the research vessel Atlantis as he participated.

The Lafourche, St. Mary, Terrebonne and Assumption Elementary Math and Science Partnership (**MSP**) project entitled Science and Math Applications and Resources for Teachers (**SMART**) hosted and informational workshop in February. Teachers were enlightened through **Dr. Christine Hypolite** along with **Cynthia Lambert** from N.S.U. as they presented six hours of professional development focusing on engaging activities in Geometry that align to the 3rd and 4th grade math GLE’s.

Michelle Morvant and **Fran Naquin** presented two science sessions at the LDE’s Annual Preschool and Kindergarten Conference. In “Students are Attracted to Science” workshop the participants explored activities enabling students to become active learners as they investigated the forces of magnets. In “The Science of Mixology” workshop, participants focused on learning through the driving force of student inquiry. Activities were explored that focused on the actions which engage learners as they “do” science.

Teachers went away with an up close and direct professional development experience as they explored the activities to successfully implement the LCC their classrooms.



Kindergarten Conference Participants

A “Mercury In Your Community and the Environment” workshop was presented by **Tera Robinson-LaPrarie**. Eye opening information was discussed to identify mercury at school, in the household, in the environment and in the community. Teachers gained valuable background information on mercury as well as youth-based activities to share with their students. Special thanks to Tera, LSTA, and DEQ for making this possible.

If you have information on school news, grants, awards, activities and pictures to share in your area you can send it to me at mahmorv@yahoo.com so I can submit it to the LASER. In the subject line please include LSTA News.

◆ Region IV News from Debra Carroll ◆

A contingency of 45 elementary, middle and high school teachers from Lafayette Parish attended NSTA. All gave rave reviews especially the first time attendees. In fact some have already gone back and made plans to go to Philadelphia in 2009.

“They’re in the Mississippi River ?” Was the recent blogging topic of 7th grade students at Paul Breaux Middle in Lafayette. It all began when **Nick Pugh** shared the joys of ham radio with the PBM students. He then offered a chance for our students to “piggy-back” onto an experiment run by the ULL engineering students in conjunction with the National Weather Service in Lake Charles. A weather balloon would be launched in late January and would carry the ULL experiment aloft to approximately 40,000 feet.

PBM students worked in pairs and designed experiments that could fit inside a ping-pong ball. Experiments included seeds, mealworms in the pupae state & Styrofoam. A control for each experiment remained in the classroom. Their teacher, **Annette Chapman**, predrilled holes in the balls so that a section of a drinking straw could be inserted. A string then connected all the ping-pong balls to the ULL experiment. The local ham radio organization organized the communications for the retrieval after launch.

The students eagerly tracked the balloon’s progress online. It landed in the Mississippi River but the string of ping-pong balls enabled the spotters to find it. The launched seeds sprouted faster than the control group but the submersion in the river probably helped. The

Styrofoam contracted to a fraction of its original size and the meal worms appeared freeze dried.

The ULL students returned the experiments to our classroom, shared the results from their own experiments, and encouraged our students to pursue an education in science. The PBM students will long remember their first hand taste of real science experimentation. Photos and further information can be found at <http://ulcape.org/2009/02/balloon-2-launch-success/>.

If you have information on school news, grants, awards, activities and pictures to share in your area, send it to debracarroll@bellsouth.net.

◆ Region V News from Tina Savoie ◆

From Cameron Parish many congratulations go to our LSTA members serving on committees for the NSTA conference. Cameron Parish participants were **Bobbye Delaney, Rachelle Demeritt, Sheri Dubard, Barbara Guidry, Betty Guidry, Peggy Griffith, Dana Hicks, Leslie Landry, Joby Richard, Tina Savoie, Gregoire Theriot**. Calcasieu teachers were **Arlene Cain** and **Linda Wygoda** were day-long volunteers on Wednesday, March 18th packing participant bags, stacking books and greeting guests. The conference was a total success according to the participants that I have heard from in both Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes.

Coastal Roots programs are getting underway in four of our regional schools. **Connie Conner's** students at Reeves High School have planted their plants. **Bobbye Delaney** and her students at Grand Lake High School have installed their canyard. **Gregoire**

Theriot and his students at Hackberry High have an April installation date for their can yard. **Tina Savoie** and the South Cameron High School students should be ready to install the can yard at their school also. These four schools will be planting grasses along the Cameron Parish coastline to help reduce erosion. Connie Conner has been very busy. Her students at Reeves High School have completed building Rube Goldberg machines and presented them to faculty members. Connie was the recipient of an LSTA travel grant to attend the NSTA conference in New Orleans. She is the President of LEEA. Congratulation, Connie, on all of your success and for sharing your news with us.

Please have your parishes represented in our news. Send emails of your exciting news to tina_savoie@camsch.org with LASER NEWS in the subject line.

◆ Region VI News from Tera Robinson-LaPrairie ◆

Lacey Hoosier (Tioga High School) has been recognized by the Town Talk, for her creative teaching methods, while teaching DNA Analysis and blood typing. Lacey sets up a mock crime scene within her classroom to allow the students an opportunity to collect and analyze data. Then the students use equipment supplied by Central Louisiana AHEC to run a DNA analysis to determine the "killer". Lacey said, her students are highly receptive to activities such as these because they provide real world examples of how science is used in our every day lives.

Elaine Beck, of Louisiana State University - Alexandria and eight of her Early Education students participated in Alexandria Middle Magnet School's 2009 School Science Fair. The eight college students helped judge over one hundred projects submitted by

sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Alexandria Middle Magnet students said it was a pleasure working with the college students and said they gave them great ideas on how to improve their projects for next year.

Pineville Jr. High and Alexandria Middle Magnet science students will be participating at the Alexandria Zoo's Party of the Planet on April 25th. Pineville Jr. High students will present a wide array of activities involving conservation issues for the Galapagos Islands, Antarctica and Louisiana. The activities will identify conservation ideas and initiatives for Antarctica and the Galapagos Islands that can also be implemented in Louisiana. Alexandria Middle Magnet students will present an assortment of outdoor activities that children and parents can enjoy

together. The activities involve making biodegradable bird feeders, using observations to learn about the local environment, and how to prepare the backyard for local birds. Participants will also receive a colorful field guide with Alexandria's most common backyard birds. For more information about Alexandria Zoo's Party for the Planet, please contact Lee Ann Whitt of the Alexandria Zoo at LeeAnn.Whitt@cityofalex.com or visit the zoo's web site at www.thealexandriazoo.com/.

Debra Carol (LSTA's Region IV Representative) and **Pam Sanders**, conducted the Mercury Workshop in Rapides Parish, for teachers in Region VI. Twenty-eight participants from the area carried out an array of activities to educate themselves about the effects Mercury has on humans and the environment. Debra and Pam used various strategies, some being literacy strategies, hands-on manipulatives, videos, and graphic organizers, to teach the valuable information about Mercury. Participants left feeling confident regarding the newly obtained information and excited about sharing the activities in their communities and schools.

◆ Region VII News from Sue Ottesen ◆

Region 7 held a bioaccumulation workshop "Where Has All the Mercury Gone" on Saturday, February 14, 2009 at SciPort Louisiana's Science Center. **Pam Sanders**, Lafayette, and **Mitch Robinson**, Eunice, presented the workshop to 15 participants. Many thanks go to Pam, Mitch, and **Cathy Williamson**, Caddo Educator for SciPort for making the workshop a great success!

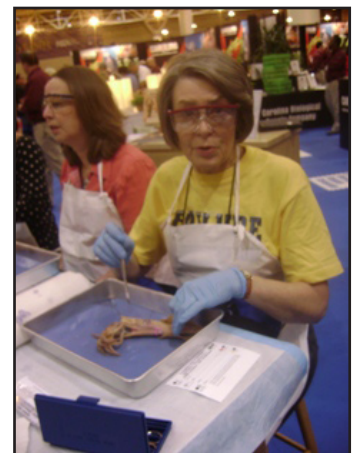
Chris Dunn at Caddo Middle Magnet has been named a PTSA Educator of Distinction.

Oil City Magnet School Discovery students presented a short program, "The Mystery of History" at the recent National Association of Interpreters, Region 6 conference at the Holidome in Shreveport. The program tells the story of trees that have had an important role in our American history. The conference participants who were state, parish, county, and local park naturalists from a seven state region were excited to see students using forestry information that they often share in their programs. It was a big day for the students!

Cindy and **Ricky Kilpatrick** also presented a session at the conference in which they highlighted the sixth grade nature study at Walter Jacobs Park. They showed how the park naturalist and the school working together have made the students more comfortable in the woods. They program uses science, math, and language arts to bring their year long project to completion. The session was also well received with wonderful comments on the evaluation sheets.

Parkway High School received a \$5,000 grant from the American Forest Foundation through Project Learning Tree to create green and healthy learning environments.

Anne P. Kilbourn will coordinate the grant as part of the PLT GreenSchools! Initiative, a new program that provides training and funding for prekindergarten through 12th-grade students and teachers to investigate environmental issues at their school and implement the action plans they develop through audits. GreenWorks! service-learning projects give educators, students, families and community organizations the opportunity to work together to improve an aspect of their neighborhood's environment.



Sue Ottesen dissecting a squid at NSTA Conference in New Orleans

◆ Region VIII News from Shavonne Garner-Price ◆

Missy Wooley, Susan Hilton, Stacy Campbell, and **Cathi Cox** attended a two day “Adopt and Adapt” workshop in Shreveport sponsored by the Cyber Innovation Center. The Lincoln Parish team learned strategies for incorporating technology into the classroom and collaborated on future plans for the district’s STEM initiative. Susan and Missy guided both Ruston Junior High and Ruston High School to top overall honors in the Regional Science Fair held at Louisiana Tech University, and Missy and Cathi accompanied RHS STEM students on a trip to LIGO in Livingston for physical science and Body Worlds in Houston for sophomores. Missy and her STEM robotics students partnered with Cathi and Project ACHIEVE to present the first annual “BUSTED For Excellence” (Bearcats Understanding STEM Through Engineering Design) day for eighth grade students who are potential STEM students as freshmen next year. The event included engineering design competitions as well as demonstrations from Louisiana Tech University professors **Dr. David Hall** (robotics) and **Dr. Bill Deese** (chemistry). Bill also made a presentation of chemistry demonstrations to the RHS Science Club as well as during The IDEA

Place’s fifteenth anniversary celebration. Stacy and her husband **Chris Campbell** sponsored teams from I. A. Lewis and Simsboro in the local Science Olympiad competition where Stacy and IAL qualified for the state event in Hammond. Cathi provided the keynote address for alternative certification candidates at the University of Arkansas in Conway and Bill was named to the planning committee for the upcoming ChemEd meeting scheduled for Denton, Texas.

Katrina Roberson of Monroe City Schools is the recipient of the honorary district’s Middle School Teacher of the Year Award. Katrina, former middle school MSP participant, is an 8th grade science teacher at Lee Junior High School.

Janie Hamby, Donna Harrell, MaryBeth McCoy, Amy Ouchley, Ava Pugh, and Jerrilene Washington were among Region 8 LSTA members who presented at the NSTA Conference.

Educational Opportunities

Teacher at Sea Educator Opportunity - August 9th - 21st, 2009

Work alongside a research team of doctoral students and assistants from Scripps Institution of Oceanography when they embark on an expedition to explore Plastics in the North Pacific Gyre . Their research focuses on one of the oldest and largest ecosystems on earth. Recently referenced as the “Great Pacific Trash Heap” the debris caught in the center of the North Pacific has the potential to damage marine life and alter the biological environment. This opportunity is aimed to enrich your professional science teaching background and surrounds a relevant environmental issue. Investigations aboard the R/V New Horizon will focus on plastics as transport mechanisms for invasive species, the impacts of plastics on mesopelagic fishes and zooplankton, analysis of bacterial community structure on pelagic plastics and documentation of the vertical distribution of debris in the water column. Those interested in being considered should fill out the teacher at sea application found online at <http://cce.lternet.edu/outreach/teachers/tas.php>. Email applications and letters of interest to Alison Cawood acawood@ucsd.edu

Aliens in the Estuary - 2-Day Invasive Species Workshop Symposium - June 30 & July 1, 2009

Last fall, scientists found invasive plants and fish in the the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary during a week-long sampling. Come to this free workshop to learn what they found, and how all ages can help to control the invaders! To register for the workshop contact Sandra at the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (Sandra@btnep.org or 1-800-259-0869) More details on the BTNEP website (www.btnep.org) in the spring.

New from PBS

THE GREENS Activity Guide springs from a PBS Web site that encourages kids ages 9 to 12 to explore sustainability and take action wherever they cans. How-to information in the Guide pairs hands-on activities to deepen kids' understanding of topics like recycling and global warming with campaigns to reduce junk mail and get drivers to stop idling cars. The Guide can be downloaded at <http://meetthegreens.pbskids.org/features/> and FREE print copies may be ordered by putting "THE GREENS" in the subject line of an e-mail to wgbhmaterialsreq@wgbh.org



The Entomological Foundation announces a new interactive web site to the public. The site is self-guided and aimed toward children and educators. To view the site go to : <http://www.cipm.info/entfnd/>

COSEE TEACHER/SCIENTIST INSTITUTE - June 21 - 26, 2009 — Louisiana and Alabama

In-service and pre-service teachers of grades 4-12 will join research scientists from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas for this course, which includes five days in residence for field activities in either Alabama or Louisiana, and 10 days of distance-learning during July. The content focus is coastal processes, habitats and organisms, and marine technology.

Teachers are requested to apply by May 31, 2009. The grant provides room and board, a wealth of ocean sciences education materials, and instruction. Participants who satisfactorily complete requirements for the course will also receive a \$500 stipend. Louisiana teachers will earn 45 CLUs. For additional information, please contact: Dr. Jessie Kastler, jessica.kastler@usm.edu or http://cosee-central-gom.org/face_to_face.htm.

Youth Outdoor Journalism Contest

Sponsored by the Louisiana Outdoor Writers' Association and The Advocate Educational Services, this essay and photography contest is designed to stimulate an interest in outdoor journalism and photography in Louisiana youth. Besides cash prizes, and other awards, the winning entries will be published in publications and websites across the state. Go to www.laoutdoorwriters.com or www.2theadvocate.com/outdoors for more information.



LASM and Target Sponsor Open House for Teachers

Saturday, May 9th
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Louisiana Art and Science Museum

Events of the day will include a presenter-led seasonal sky show, LASM's traveling planetarium (Discovery Dome) and a new live presentation called "Weather wise." Go to: www.lasm.org for more information.

Vernier Summer Workshops Feature AP Science

Workshops in 15 cities nationwide teach educators how to investigate science experiments using 'LabQuest' in and out of the classroom. Several workshops will cover experiments required by the College Board for Advanced Placement (AP). For more information about the workshops visit <http://www.vernier.com/workshop/summer.html>



