

## Message from the Chair



Dr. Susan Sciascia,  
Chair

### Renewal in Times of Crisis

At some level everyone's attention is focused on the financial sector of our society. We wonder how loss of State aid and other financial concerns will impact our communities and schools. As we are developing contingency plans to address the variety of scenarios which

may occur, we need to rally to ensure that the gains made on behalf of those traditionally underserved are retained.

These are challenging times for those of us charged with the oversight responsibility for our schools. Now, as ever, we need vigilant participation as programs may be modified and/or eliminated. Our mission for gender balance and equity of opportunity needs to stay in the forefront as we develop possible plans for increased efficiency.

Integrating valuable concepts and ideas to keep ground that has been gained in advancing opportunity for all rather than sacrificing some ideas for others is key. The resultant conservative plans and programs will then be a result of traditional values and hard won achievement reflecting every segment of our population.

It is imperative to be involved at the decision making table to ensure all voices are heard as we continue the journey today. It is critical that those who have been among the pathfinders be involved. It is critical that those who are tomorrow's leaders be involved. Together, we will create not only more efficient schools and school districts but more effective and truly more representational educational institutions for the new age to live our

(continued on page 2)

## Congratulations Mary Alice Price 2009 New York State Superintendent of the Year



Mary Alice Price

Mary Alice Price, Superintendent of the Pittsford Central School District, has been recognized as the **2009 Superintendent of the Year** by the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS). During her acceptance speech at the recent NYCROSS Conference in Albany, Mary Alice offered the following

comments to her colleagues. Her suggestions are very applicable for effective leadership from which we all might learn. She outlined her five lessons learned along the way:

Lesson~

1. Is to live and lead according to a few absolutes: Consider her **Four Absolutes** including her commitment to each of the following:
  1. Kids
  2. Excellence
  3. Collaboration
  4. Her own ethical behavior and the ethical behavior of others
2. Reach out to the horizon and thus provide that vision for everyone else in the district.
3. Be selective about what needs changing and how to go about these changes.
4. Plan carefully but be open to serendipitous change.
5. Be yourself. Stating "I don't know yet." brings people together to work together.

Mary Alice Price models excellence in leadership. Emerging and current leaders can learn a great deal from her many outstanding attributes.

**Message from the Chair** (Continued from page 1)  
convictions and maintain the course for the common good.

As NYSAWA approaches its 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, we will celebrate the strides that have been made and face the current challenges so that there will be hope for and gains reflected in the future built upon the accomplishments of the past.

As women in leadership we will contribute in the immediate crises and sustain our contribution providing a better future for all students and aspiring candidates for leadership positions. Today, as always, NYSAWA will be the beacon for equity of opportunity and hope for a better tomorrow.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Conference, May 3 and 4, 2009.

## NYSAWA Welcome from the Executive Director

With the Obama administration just beginning to take hold, it is interesting to reflect upon how the selection and development of Obama's cabinet reflects that of Abraham Lincoln. In Doris Kearns Goodwin's book *A Team of Rivals*, she illustrates how the men who were Lincoln's rivals for the Republican nomination in 1860 would later form the core of his cabinet. Lincoln showed unbelievable patience for the ambitions, rivalries, jealousies and weaknesses of these advisors. Despite the fact that many of his advisors initially thought themselves superior to him, Lincoln ultimately gained their respect, admiration and support.

Goodwin details the strengths and shortcomings of Lincoln and his team during a period in our history when our leaders were faced with severe challenges. She weaves a compelling story about how key decisions were made and the influences that impacted these decisions. Our nation is once again facing very severe conditions and an often asked question returns. "What can we learn from history"?

I was wondering how we as educational leaders embrace our teams of rivals in furthering our work. Are we able to truly listen to opposing viewpoints and demonstrate the type of patience that Lincoln did in moving our organizations past the rivalries,



jealousies, ambitions and weaknesses that might otherwise stifle necessary change? Goodwin describes the interactions among these rivals and how they ultimately came together under Lincoln's leadership. As leaders, what successful strategies can you share that foster collaboration? How does this collaboration help to focus all stakeholders on our common vision?

During these difficult times, many of our stakeholders will experience stress and their self-interests may emerge as they face career, financial and personal challenges. Some are resilient while others may crumble. Please share with us the strategies you have found to be successful in helping your supporters and teams of rivals during stressful situations. Please email your suggestions to [Gilmour@oswego.edu](mailto:Gilmour@oswego.edu).



**Dr. Suzanne Gilmour,  
Executive Director**

## Calendar of Events

**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**Our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Conference, titled *Effective Leadership in a P-20 World*, will be held at the Desmond Hotel in Albany on May 3 & 4, 2009.**

## Visit the NYSAWA Website

For more information on events and the conference, please visit [www.nysawa.org](http://www.nysawa.org) and select the **Events** tab (forms & publications).

## Membership Renewal...

Your continued support of NYSAWA is needed. Many who did not or were unable to attend the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference have not yet submitted their membership renewal fee of \$50. Please submit your membership fee of \$50 payable to NYSAWA to Suzanne Gilmour, Executive Director, 303 Park Hall, Oswego, NY 13126. Membership form is available at <http://www.nysawa.org/docs.cfm> (Membership is free with your Annual Conference registration).

## Affiliate Updates:

### Capital

Heidi Bromley [hbromley@mohonsen.org](mailto:hbromley@mohonsen.org) or [heidijbromley@gmail.com](mailto:heidijbromley@gmail.com), Marna Meltzer [meltmhas@bcasd.neric.org](mailto:meltmhas@bcasd.neric.org), Lisa Mulhall (alternate) [lmulhall@mullhallassociates.com](mailto:lmulhall@mullhallassociates.com)

For up to date information, please visit their website at: <http://www.casdany.org/CDAWA.htm>

### Central New York

Sally Feinberg [sfeinber@twcny.rr.com](mailto:sfeinber@twcny.rr.com), Deborah Glisson (alternate) [dglisson@mcs.cnyric.org](mailto:dglisson@mcs.cnyric.org)

The Central New York affiliate will host a panel discussion on March 26th at the University Sheraton Hotel, Syracuse, New York. The title for the evening's presentation is:

### Leadership Resiliency in Tough Financial Times

- Supporting Your District
- Supporting Yourself
- Keeping Kids First
- 

Panelists for this poignant discussion will be:

- **Dr. Donna DeSiato**, Superintendent, East Syracuse Minoa CSD
- **Ms. Sandy Sherwood**, Superintendent, Dryden CSD
- **Ms. Chris Vogelsang**, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Syracuse City SD

For more information and a flier, please visit the [nysawa.org](http://nysawa.org) website event's page.

### Cortland/Ithaca WEL

Holly Kazarinoff [hkazarinoff@mail.tstboces.org](mailto:hkazarinoff@mail.tstboces.org)  
Jane O'Brien [jobrien@tstboces.org](mailto:jobrien@tstboces.org)

### Finger Lakes

Barbara Goldammer  
[barbara\\_goldammer@websterschools.org](mailto:barbara_goldammer@websterschools.org)  
Brenda Harrington [Brenda.Harrington@RCSDK12.org](mailto:Brenda.Harrington@RCSDK12.org)  
The FINGER LAKES website is now linked with the state organization.  
<https://nysawafingerlakes.wikispaces.com/> They will register online for the spring meeting.

### Long Island - Nassau

Gloria Dingwall [gdingwall@westburyschools.org](mailto:gdingwall@westburyschools.org)  
Juanita Sherwood [jsherwood@westburyschools.org](mailto:jsherwood@westburyschools.org)

### Long Island - Suffolk

Kathleen Corbett [k\\_corbett@hotmail.com](mailto:k_corbett@hotmail.com)

### Mid Hudson WEL

Donna Moss [dmoss@hbschools.us](mailto:dmoss@hbschools.us)

The Mid-Hudson Women in Educational Leadership affiliate held their winter meeting on Monday, February 23, 2009, at Cappucino's, Route 9S, Poughkeepsie, New York.

A panel discussion was held entitled "Leading in Difficult Times: How to Do More with Less" with Maria Rice, Superintendent of New Paltz CSD, Fern Aefsky, Superintendent of Beacon City School District, and Eileen Camasso, Superintendent of Rondout Valley CSD.

Stop by and see our new web site!!! The Mid-Hudson Women in Educational Leadership has its own web site where you can get news of upcoming meetings, chat with members about articles or interesting topics, and connect to the NYSAWA website. The web site is: <http://midhudsonwel.wikispaces.com/>. Thank you to Susannah Renzi who has been instrumental in developing, updating, and maintaining this web site.

Barbara Hastie, New Paltz CSD, and Aviva Kafka, Hyde Park CSD, are the co-chairs for this year. They have spent a large amount of time in conjunction with Susannah Renzi in organizing the upcoming meeting, and will be distributing information about the next affiliate meeting, which will be held in May.

Thank you to Dr. Donna Moss who recently went to each component school district web site in our four county affiliate area and compiled the names and email addresses of women administrators, which were then entered into the MHWEL web site. If you would like your e-mail address added to the database, please go to our webpage at <http://midhudsonwel.wikispaces.com/> and follow the link to add your information.

The affiliate leadership is considering holding a summer retreat - if you are interested in helping to plan this event, please contact Barbara Hastie at [Bhastie@newpaltz.k12.ny.us](mailto:Bhastie@newpaltz.k12.ny.us).

### New York City

Margaret Bing-Wade [mbingwa@aol.com](mailto:mbingwa@aol.com)  
Shelia Evans-Tranumn [STranumn@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:STranumn@mail.nysed.gov)  
Sharon Simmons [ssimmons68@aol.com](mailto:ssimmons68@aol.com)

### North Country

Lisa Parsons [lparsons5@frontiernet.net](mailto:lparsons5@frontiernet.net)

Please join us for the CNY event (CNYSAWA March 26, 2009 - Leadership Resiliency in Tough Financial Times), so we can brainstorm ideas for a spring event in the North Country.

## Westchester

Margie O'Brien [mobrien@greenburgh7.com](mailto:mobrien@greenburgh7.com)

Susan Sciascia [ssciascia@greenburgh7.com](mailto:ssciascia@greenburgh7.com)

The Lower Hudson Council of Administrative Women in Education (LHCAWE) is being revised around a Leadership for Girls Project that is using "Women Helping Girls with Choices."

The February 6, 2009 meeting was a working session through which leadership materials designed by Margie O'Brien, Humanities Coordinator of Greenburgh Central School District #7, were modified by the participants for piloting in the local area.

Supporting this project is the Edith Winthrop Teacher Center by offering a spring course entitled "Women Helping Girls with Choices" that will focus on helping girls develop leadership potential (Woodlands High School, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM). For further information contact Dr. Susan Sciascia at 914.761.6000 ext. 3112.

## Western NY

Maureen Fernandez [mfernandez@lackawanna.wnyric.org](mailto:mfernandez@lackawanna.wnyric.org)

Margaret Jones-Carey [mjones-carey@e1b.org](mailto:mjones-carey@e1b.org)

## You Gain Strength

by Dr. Lisa Mulhall and Dr. Ann Myers

*You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' The danger lies in refusing to face the fear, in not daring to come to grips with it. If you fail anywhere along the line, it will take away your confidence. You must make yourself succeed every time. You must do the thing you think you cannot do."*

— Eleanor Roosevelt  
*You Learn By Living (1960)*

The greatest threat to continued change is not dwindling financial resources; it is the distraction that grows as a result of anxiety and fear. This budget year, we find ourselves planning within a deepening economic crisis, a crisis on the brink of catastrophic proportion. Perhaps we will find ourselves barely missing that bullet with benefits from the stimulus package. Nevertheless, personally and professionally we are navigating within highly uncertain times.

Regardless of role, the tendency during times of fiscal crisis is emotional withdrawal. Dreams and goals are suspended as we seek shelter, anticipate loss, and prepare to enter battle over scarce resources. Fear disables work environments,

minimizing risk taking and stifling innovation. It erodes joy and destroys trust.

For children there can be no self imposed moratorium on progress. They enter the doors of our schools each day, good times and bad, and they need us. They need us to press on with ingenuity and courage. They need us to marshal every resource at our disposal on their behalf. The work is always challenging. In difficult times, the leadership challenge is to resist the response to withdraw. Instead, those who lead must heed the advice of Otto Scharmer, author of *Theory U*, to open up and search for the new opportunities and new relationships waiting to emerge.

Time, energy and expertise remain in our hands. While our work may not look exactly as it has in the past, meaningful change often happens in the darkest moments. Phenomenal capacity lies within the collaboration among committed and skilled educational leaders dedicated to the success of all children. Power lies in the synergy created when they join together with a vision of possibility rather than limitation. Courage allows us to find one another.

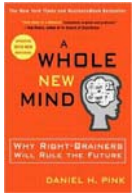
Organizations can sustain and deepen the positive aspects of collaborative cultures. Communities with concerned, skillful, reflective, and trustworthy leaders can thrive at this moment. Unlike other initiatives, the work of building and reinforcing positive organizational cultures does not require money. It requires the courage to lead in unprecedented times despite the whirling distractions. It is then that we become the leaders that John Quincy Adams described when he invoked the need for leaders to inspire others to dream more, learn more, and become more.

## Superintendent Development Program

For more information on the Superintendent Development Program, please contact Dr. Glenn Wachter at [wachter@oswego.edu](mailto:wachter@oswego.edu)



## Book Reviews



### *A Whole New Mind*

By Daniel H. Pink

(Penguin Group, Inc., 2006)

Reviewed by Lisa A. Parsons '96

It seems like there has not been a passing day recently when the headlines didn't read..."Jobs Cut"..."Layoffs Made"..."Businesses Closing"..."! The economy is in turmoil and the future of certain types of jobs and jobs skills is in question. As educational leaders we must think about this as we reflect on our visions for our schools and the students we are responsible for. Are we really preparing individuals to be productive, positive, global citizens by placing a major focus on the core subjects within the curriculum and, subsequently only measuring intelligence by standardized testing?

So much of what we have done in education in previous years has focused on "what you were thinking" as we strived to build knowledge and develop skills. Daniel Pink takes a different perspective in his book, *A Whole New Mind*. Pink challenges the traditional way of thinking which has brought us through the Industrial Revolution and the Information Age. Pink cites data such as the changes in the workforce revealing "one out of ten jobs in the U.S. computer, software, and information technology industry will move overseas in the next two years" (39). He also provides historical examples such as John Henry's loss to the steam engine and Garry Kasparov defeat in chess to a computer. Pink makes the point of saying automation, abundance, and Asia are the three critical factors that have ushered us into the Conceptual Age. Formerly, a White House speech writer, Pink uses his background experiences to reflect on social, economic, and cultural trends and the impact technology has had on them.

Specifically, addressing the need for what he calls "high concept and high touch" aptitudes, Pink asks readers to reflect on what they are doing today and think about whether that job can be done by a worker overseas cheaper and/or by a computer faster. He expounds on this further by exploring the rapid technological changes we are witnessing and proposes it will be *the creator* and *the empathizer* who will excel in the era of the Conceptual Age.

The dominance of left brain's sequential, logical, literal, and categorical thinking is being reduced by more efficient and faster computers. Therefore, the

jobs of the future will be those that require one to understand relationships and patterns, see the big picture, weave pieces together, and allow for emotional expressions; or "right brain thinking". A repeated hypothesis in *A Whole New Mind* is that the MFA will hold more value to an organization than an MBA. Pink posits what he believes are six essential attributes an individual must have or develop to be successful; design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning. He devotes a chapter of the book to each of these attributes.

One of the best aspects of this book is that Daniel Pink goes beyond just sharing his perspective with factual information, strong data, and interesting stories. At the end of each attribute chapter, he has added a portfolio which includes resources, references, and activities that will increase one's understanding and further develop the respective attribute. This portion of the book provides excellent activities one could use for staff development or faculty meetings to promote a culture of empathy, interconnectedness, or to review curricular design.



### *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*

by Clayton M. Christensen, Michael B. Horn, and Curtis W. Johnson

(McGraw-Hill Companies, 2008)

Reviewed by Dr. William Silky

Clayton Christensen has developed a theory known as "disruptive change". Essentially, disruptive change theory is very similar to an earlier, well-known change notion of "paradigm shift" promoted by futurist Joel Barker. In essence, both theories advocate that for any organization (including schools) to make fundamental, sustained improvement, leaders need to think differently. Christensen and his colleagues take this theory one step further in this book to discuss some specifics of how disruptive change can be applied to schools. He tells us that "Disruption is a positive force. It is the process by which an innovation transforms a market whose services or products are complicated and expensive into one where simplicity, convenience, accessibility, and affordability characterize the industry" (p. 11).

Chapter 1 begins by expounding on a fundamental truism that underpins the argument schools will need to be disrupted if we want to make significant change--which every student learns in a

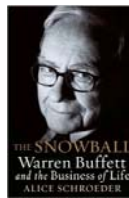
different way. He then extends this truism to argue that "a key step toward making school intrinsically motivating is to customize an education to match the way each child learns best" (p. 10). Existing monolithic structures in schools make it necessary to standardize the way we teach and test and that disruptive change will be necessary to "customize" instruction to each individual student.

The authors provide detail as to how the technology available today, coupled with new insights into how people learn and moving learning outside the existing monolithic K-12 structure, will permit simplicity, convenience, accessibility, and affordability in the delivery of education. The beginning of each chapter starts with a fictional vignette about a struggling school in California to illustrate the existing structural limitations of the current educational system.

The authors conclude the introduction of the book by saying, "The road to realizing our highest hopes for our school is not an easy one. But with breakthroughs occurring every day in understanding how children learn and how they build intellectual capacity, there is great opportunity to make strides in the years ahead, providing we do so with an understanding of the root causes of why schools have struggled so much. If we embark upon the promising path we outline in this book, we can make schooling intrinsically motivating and help children maximize their individual potential to realize their most daring dreams" (p. 14).

I wish I could recommend this book--but I can't! Explanation of the theory is very dense (hard to understand) and, at least for me, difficult to transfer and apply to schools as I know them. Like many change theories that emanate from another enterprise the business sector, the military, etc., they don't always apply to K-12 public schooling for lack of complete understanding of our organizations. Like many others outside education, these authors characterize schools as "failing". I don't think we are. And they claim to have the silver bullet to "fix" them I don't believe they have found it.

If you simply like to study the literature on change theory, pick it up.....if you are looking for good ideas as to how we can improve our profession to better serve our students, don't waste your time and money.



## *The Snowball: Warren Buffett and the Business of Life*

by Alice Schroeder, Richard McGonagle  
(Bantam Books, 2008)

Reviewed by Dr. Glenn Wachter

It's always an interesting journey to select the book choice for the department's newsletter. Unless I'm already in the midst of reading a particular book, it's generally a trip to Barnes and Noble. Not this time however! My wonderful wife, Rita, belongs to a neighborhood book club. What I especially find interesting about this book club is not that it has been in existence for over 50 years. Rather, I remain fascinated that books are NOT discussed at their meetings. Yes, they have guest authors or literary experts at their monthly meetings but they never discuss the books they are reading. Now, this is my kind of book club---no pressure!

So...my wife has been reading a book about leadership as her 'book club book'. On the surface, it doesn't appear to be a book on leadership but if we consider that a leader is often defined by those that pay attention to or follow him/her, then we can suppose we are talking about leadership. The book is *Snowball: Warren Buffett and the Business of Life* by Alice Schroeder. I suppose everyone used to listen to E. F. Hutton but lately, it is my perception that a lot of people listen to Warren Buffett so I began to read the book.

The book traces many of Buffett's successful business strategies back to experiences he had growing up and early on in his career. From his many paper routes, to losing a week's worth of income at the horse races, we learn about the truly human side of this financial genius. It seems that he rarely made the same misstep twice and often immediately gained perspective on his wrong turns. Let's take the horserace experience when Buffett was 16 years old. This time, unattended by his high school friend, who knew all about the horses, Buffett kept on betting and losing until he had lost more than \$175. He used whatever change remaining in his pockets for a giant hot fudge sundae and reflected that he had lost more than a week's worth of income, all for "dumb reasons". He comments, and this is where his ability to quickly assess and learn from the error is apparent, "You're not supposed to bet every race. I'd committed the worst sin, which is that you get behind and you think you've got to break even that day. The first rule is that nobody goes home after the first race and the second rule is that you don't have to make it back

the way you lost it. That is so fundamental, you know”.

It is as if the author uncovers many of Buffett’s life learned fundamentals which Buffet has translated into his becoming one of the world’s wealthiest individuals. Yet, this book is not a simple expose on the truisms that Buffett has lived by. It reveals and unravels Warren Buffet’s thinking and actions in a seemingly unending number of financial transactions, crises, and decisions that would impact the national and world economic situation. Did you know he heavily invested in GEICO? It shows Buffett as having courage, insight and some stubbornness, but an undeniable ability to gauge people.

As I read the book, I often was struck by how many lessons, or at least applicable observations, were to be taken from the book for our world of educational leadership. It’s not a short book [over 900 pages] but the one-ten page chapters which often appear are a wonderful reprieve. If you want an interesting parallel to inspire reflections about leadership, or if a significant other needs a book for his/her book club reading, I highly recommend this one.



**19<sup>th</sup> Annual NYSAWA  
Conference  
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP  
IN A P-20 WORLD  
Registration Form  
May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

- **Full Conference Registration** **\$275**  
(includes all conference events, meals, and free annual membership)
- **Educational Leadership Student or Retiree Registration** **\$195**  
(includes all conference events, meals, and free annual membership)
- **Sunday Only** **\$175**  
(includes Sunday’s conference events, meals and free annual membership)
- **Monday Only** **\$175**  
(includes Monday’s conference events, meals and free annual membership)
- **Monday Luncheon Only** **\$45**

*Note:* Career consultants will be available Monday morning for one-on-one counseling sessions for all administrative positions. Please check below if you wish us to schedule an appointment. Bring your resumé.

*Yes, I want an appointment with a career consultant.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

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**Registration due April 3, 2009**

Method of Payment:

**Payable to NYSAWA**

Check

Purchase Order (Plus \$25 Service Charge)

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Refund requests in writing must be received no later than April 3, 2009.  
No-shows are not refundable, but you may send a substitute in your place.

For rooms at the Desmond Conference Center, please call the hotel directly at 1-800-448-3500. Give booking number 11G039 for the NYSAWA Conference Rate of \$128 for single/double rooms. Reservations at this rate are guaranteed if made by April 6, 2009

**For more information contact**

Brenda Harrington (585-324-3720 x 1494) or

[Brenda.Harrington@rcsdk12.org](mailto:Brenda.Harrington@rcsdk12.org)

[www.nysawa.org](http://www.nysawa.org) (for a printed brochure)

**Mail registration and payment to:**

Chris Taylor, Educational Administration Department, 303 Park Hall, Oswego NY 13126

**NYSAWA 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

We will be celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary May 2010. A committee has been already working on this upcoming celebration. Rita Lashway, Susan Sciascia, Suzanne Gilmour, Donna Moss, Heidi Bromley, Ann Myers, and Marna Meltzer would appreciate receiving any artifacts from NYSAWA’s earlier years. Also, if you have contact information for previous board members or affiliate members who may have retired, please email this information to [gilmour@oswego.edu](mailto:gilmour@oswego.edu) Artifacts may be mailed to NYSAWA c/o Suzanne Gilmour, 303 Park Hall, Oswego NY 13126.

*You received this message because you are a member of the New York State Association for Women in Administration (NYSAWA).*

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