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President's Newsletter Message  
**Kathy I. Norman**, ASTE President

**Science Teacher Educators: Meet with the Media**



Have we been too quiet for too long? The Winter 2006 President's Message focused on the importance of speaking out for science teacher education in our communities, states and nations. We have been speaking to each other, as well as presenting and writing for each other for decades. Working with the media has become an important part of university business and, as science educators, it is our responsibility to assist the public in gaining an understanding of the nature of science and science education issues. The media are effective tools for communicating our priorities to the public and provide opportunities to educate the public to be proactive and to get involved in important actions. Beth Bacon said it well in *Communities at Work: A Guidebook of Strategic Interventions for Community Change*, (2001, p. 14): "It is not enough just to talk; public dialogue needs to be structured to produce action-oriented outcomes." Talking with the media can initiate that dialogue.

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An opportunity to voice your thoughts to the media was presented recently by Senator Kay Hutchinson (R-TX) when she proposed an amendment which could alter the future of NSF and direct NSF to give priority to the funding of research in physical science, mathematics, engineering and technology, curtailing funding to the behavioral (and possibly biological) sciences. It is our responsibility, as ASTE members and science teacher educators, to ensure that the public understands the impact of such an amendment and to advocate for improved programs and systems in science education.

As you prepare to deliver your message in an interview or other interaction with the media, use the resources of your university, state and national associations. For the latest news and information on K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education issues and U.S. legislation, visit <http://www.triangle-coalition.org/legnews.htm> (The Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education), [www.stemedcoalition.org](http://www.stemedcoalition.org) (The STEM Education Coalition) or [www.stemedcaucus.org](http://www.stemedcaucus.org) (The STEM Education Caucus). Be sure you have correct information that you plan to share. Be concise and accurate, and include a story in your message. Prepare three to five points to get your message across as briefly as possible in less than 30 seconds. Include answers to these questions:

- ◆ What is the issue?
- ◆ What is your involvement with the issue?
- ◆ Why is it important?
- ◆ What is the historical perspective?

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## President's message continued

Come to an interview prepared with your message. Find opportunities to present your message while answering reporters' questions. It does not hurt to repeat your message several times. If you say it enough, the reporter will more than likely use what you say. Remember that you are the expert and you know what is important for the public to hear. Talk about the effect the topic of discussion will have on students and teachers. Provide enough background information so that what you talk about is understandable to members of the community. Acknowledge those who support your issue. Tips to keep in mind when talking with the media include: be informative and to the point, not conversational, be brief, know your role and answer questions from that role's perspective, don't use jargon, say what you mean, and be patient and friendly. Be sure to talk from the public's point of view, be very clear, be confident, don't be defensive, cite facts, and remember – don't be afraid to repeat yourself. (*Today@UCI: Meet the Media*, [http://today.uci.edu/resources/meet\\_the\\_media.asp](http://today.uci.edu/resources/meet_the_media.asp)).

Additional principles to follow in interacting with the media were provided by ASTE member John Staver who has worked extensively with the media in Kansas and Washington, D.C. John is past-president of ASTE and past-president of NARST. He advises:

1. Take whatever time is necessary until the media person feels that he/she has the information that he/she wanted.
2. Remain calm and rational.
3. Always explain why you disagree with a position and explain your own position.
4. Spend your time on the strengths of your own view rather than on criticizing the other position.
5. Keep in mind that the members of the media are not science experts, and don't assume that they know the science; try to explain various facets of the issues through analogies and slip in whatever science you can.
6. Try to find something to say that would be a good quote; it will be printed widely.

Television coverage is an effective means of conveying information and explaining points of view. Guidelines are presented below from *Today@UCI: Meet the Media* ([http://today.uci.edu/resources/meet\\_the\\_media.asp](http://today.uci.edu/resources/meet_the_media.asp)). The purposes of the following suggestions are to minimize distractions and allow the reporter and the viewers to concentrate on what you are saying in television interviews.

- ◆ Voices often are lost when talking into a microphone. Speak up and smile when it is appropriate. The impression should be of a confident, thoughtful, and caring individual.
- ◆ On camera, be prepared for little personal space between you and the interviewer. Do not back away.
- ◆ Use gestures to emphasize energy effectively.
- ◆ When sitting, sit up straight without swiveling or rocking. Do not lean on the arm rest of the chair. Lean forward a bit - showing interest, not back - showing fear or indifference. At the conclusion, do not jump up out of your chair; the show's credits may be rolling over the scene.
- ◆ When standing, stand up straight, without slouching and tilted shoulders. Do not rock forward and back or sway side to side. Keep your hands at your sides or bend your elbows slightly at your waist. Don't put your hands in your pockets, don't hold them in front of you, and don't cross your arms over your chest. If you are not comfortable holding your hands at your sides, hold a book or other "prop."
- ◆ Hold your head up high without tilting it to one side. Be an active listener and nod in apparent agreement when appropriate.
- ◆ Eye movement is critical; don't look at the camera. Look at the reporter 100% of the time. Focus on the bridge of his or her nose if you don't want to look them in the eye continuously.
- ◆ Project your voice, be expressive, and you'll come across better. Voices sound best when they are from the lower register, yet they get higher when people are nervous. Lower your voice through awareness and controlled, deep breathing. Smiling will help to animate your voice.
- ◆ Wear solid colors or soft shades. Color in ties and scarfs reflect color onto the face. Don't wear high contrasts like black and white, and avoid horizontal stripes and other distracting patterns.
- ◆ Be aware of how you show stress, and minimize outward expressions of stress. The more interviews you give, the easier it will be!

You have rights regarding being interviewed and you should know these rights. They include the following: the right to know who is interviewing you, the right to be free of pressure to answer, the right to be treated courteously, the right to make your own recording, the right to have a public affairs representative with you, the right to get your own points across, the right to be quoted accurately, and the right to protect the privacy of

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**President's message continued**

individuals. Additional rights you have are the rights to establish ground rules (time/place/location), to be free from physical harm, and to end an interview.

Working with the media is an important part of the work we do and needs to become even more important as we seek ways to interact with the members of our communities, regions and nations, to help them understand the importance of scientific literacy for all of society. The next step is to become proactive in policy advocacy on issues pertinent to improving science teaching and learning in schools; this will be the focus of the next President's Message.



**Announcements**

The ASTE Board of Directors thanks Walter and Caryl Smith for their outstanding service to the Association over the past five years and, it is with regret, that we accept their resignations as Executive Secretaries due to Caryl's health issues. The Association has seen tremendous growth and change during their tenure. We extend our best wishes to Walt and Caryl as they move to Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Eugene Wagner as Executive Secretary effective June 1, 2006. Eugene will also maintain his role as the Director of Electronic Services. We look forward to working with Eugene as Executive Secretary.

Eugene's contact information is: Dr. Eugene Wagner, 113 Radcliff Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, ewagner@pitt.edu



Did you know that ASTE sponsors the science section of the online peer reviewed journal *Contemporary Issues in Technology Education* (CITE)? Did you know this journal has issued a call for articles describing research on the use of technology in preservice science teacher education? Are you looking for articles on the use of technology in preservice science teacher education? Visit [CITEjournal.org](http://CITEjournal.org) to read the most recent issue of this online quarterly journal.

Then, while you are working on your proposal for the 2007 ASTE meeting, think about how that proposal could become an article submitted to CITE. Visit our website at <http://www.citejournal.org/> and select "Submissions" (upper right corner of the page) for more information on how to submit your article.

Questions? Email the section editor, Ruth S. Burkett [rsburkett@mac.com](mailto:rsburkett@mac.com) or [rburkett@cmsu.edu](mailto:rburkett@cmsu.edu).



**ASTE'S INCLUSIVE SCIENCE EDUCATION FORUM**

The Inclusive Science Education Forum (ISEF) was established with the purpose of developing ways to enable ASTE members to improve their understanding and sensitivity to human diversity. The Forum is concerned with science teacher education as it pertains to teaching science to students with disabilities and/or students whose race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender have alienated or may alienate them from full participation in science. The Forum acts as an umbrella group within which operate more focused interest areas, such as those listed above.

In previous years, the ISEF has produced a focused index or listing of ISEF-related presentations at the annual ASTE conference. A current project of the ISEF is the compilation of a bibliography of professional journal articles pertaining to inclusive science education, organized by the categories of disabilities, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, English as a second language, informal science, middle level/middle school, multicultural, rural and urban, and gender issues and themes. The ISEF has a website that is currently in transition to a new host institution. Persons interested in accessing that site should contact either Marcia Feters ([marcia.fetter@wmich.edu](mailto:marcia.fetter@wmich.edu)) or Kevin Finson ([finson@bradley.edu](mailto:finson@bradley.edu)).

The ISEF will host a forum session at the 2007 ASTE conference, and we encourage all conference attendees to join us to learn more about the forum and to contribute ideas to enhance the forum's visibility and service to science education.



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## **ASTE Promoting Leadership in, and support for those involved in professional development of teachers of science**

### **ASTE Newsletter**

Published four times a year by the Association for Science Teacher Education. All members are invited to submit items.

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| Summer       | Aug. 15             |
| Fall         | Oct. 15             |
| Winter       | Feb. 15             |
| Spring       | May 15              |

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Hello: I wanted to remind people to check out the ASTE website and follow the link for "Current Events and Announcements" where they will find information for the 2007 Annual Conference included keynote speakers, their biographies and topics, hotel information, forms for conference papers and workshops, and area information. Please note that the deadline for submissions is June 30, 2006.

Best, Dana  
Conference Chair

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