

BIG! IT'S GOING TO BE BIG! That's what the NAEA promised and delivered at the 2013 Conference in Fort Worth and we kept pace with BIG.

Special Needs Art Education SNAE presented over twenty sessions with most filled to capacity: participants stood against the wall and sat on the floor. The presentations included "Motivating Incarcerated Youth," "Community Collaborations, the Use of Photography," "iPads to Connect with Students," "Findings of Research Conducted with Art and Special Needs Students," and "Meeting the Challenges of Teaching Art to Students with Autism." All sessions generated invigorating dialogue amongst the participants who are anxious to improve the learning of their students with special needs. Coming together to share our successes and challenges sets a tone of resolve to better serve our students by building on their ability, and to continue to communicate with each other.

A debt of gratitude goes to Adrienne Hunter, our outgoing (SNAE) president, who continually works to build SNAE and to insure that its membership increases. Always an effective conference presenter, Adrienne has set the bar as she continues to speak on teaching at-risk and incarcerated youth, on which she is an expert. Thank you, Adrienne, for your remarkable work with people with special needs and SNAE!

At the second and final SNAE business meeting, the gavel was passed from the outgoing President, Adrienne Hunter, to the President-Elect Lynne Horoschak. Juliann Dorff was elected as President-Elect with Joe Parsons continuing in his role as Secretary. In addition, Doug Blandy, member at large of the NAEA Research Commission and liaison to SNAE, introduced the commission's mission and goals. He also discussed current commission initiatives and invited members of SNAE to communicate with the commission about research priorities and how they can assist in advancing those priorities. This year the commission will 1) launch an interactive website, 2) initiate a research agenda, 3) create working groups devoted to specific initiatives, and 4) reach out to related interest groups beyond NAEA. Juliann Dorff, SNAE President-Elect, will serve as the SNAE liaison to Doug Blandy and the NAEA Research Commission. Our membership will be contacted by Juliann to provide information on ways they can support us so be sure to speak up!

A Communication Committee was formed to research and implement the best means to stay in touch with our members. Thanks to Adrienne Hunter and Lynne Horoschak for co-chairing the committee. The listserv has been updated by Nancy Lampert, who has generously agreed to email any announcements or information to our members. Please let me know what is hot in your region so I can pass it on to all of our members!

The Awards Ceremony honored two outstanding art educators. Julia Kellman received the 2013 NAEA, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and VSA Beverly Levitt Gerber Special Needs Lifetime Achievement Award, and Heather Ryerson Fountain received the NAEA, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and VSA Peter J. Geisser Special Needs Art Educator of the Year Award.

Congratulations go to Past SNAE President Peter Geisser who is the NAEA Eastern Region Vice President - Elect and to Mary McMurtery who is honored as the Rhode Island Educator of 2013 and received the Rhode Island Special Needs Art Educator Award.

Speaking of Special Needs State Winners - in addition to Mary, we congratulate Julie Sawyer from Connecticut, Lolly Lincoln from Massachusetts, Heather Fountain from Pennsylvania, Frances Anderson from South Carolina and Kathi Zamora from Nevada. We hope that more state organizations will honor the art educators who are dedicated to improving the life and learning of our special needs students. Please keep SNAE up to date with your plans for a Special Needs Art Educator Award. We look forward to hearing from you!