

# FROM THE EDITOR

Out of Control and EVS



**E**very once in a while, I get asked to talk about my job. I've spoken at middle and high school career days, written "spot news" stories with elementary school students, and discussed the merits of public education and journalism at state and national conferences.

Those talks, much like this space here, provide a small behind-the-scenes glimpse of what goes into writing for and editing a monthly magazine for school leaders. They include my icebreakers—"Can he really name all 44 presidents in less than 30 seconds?"—as well as a few facts about the magazine and the staff I'm fortunate enough to supervise.

Did you know that *ASBJ*, at 118 years and counting, is the most continuously published magazine devoted to K-12 school leadership? Or did you know that our editorial staff—Kathleen Vail, Lawrence Hardy, Del Stover, Naomi Dillon, Joetta Sack-Min, and yours truly—has more than 100 years of education reporting experience combined?

All three facts, including the one about the presidents, are true. And here's another one for you: For the past 2 1/2 years, one or more of our six editors has written the primary cover story.

This month, it's Del's turn, and his

story—"Out of Control," Page 14—is guaranteed to grab and keep your attention. For the story on the implosion and rebirth of Georgia's Clayton County School Board, Del traveled to the district, watched hours of board meetings on video, and interviewed past and present board members and administrators. He also brought the insight that he has gained from covering school boards for more than two decades.

In the wrong hands, the story could be a simplistic bashing of public schools, but as Del astutely notes: "Evidence clearly shows that most of the nation's nearly 14,900 school boards are successful and play crucial roles in helping to improve student achievement. Yes, some fall short—and a few fail spectacularly. But there are lessons to be learned from failure."

Meanwhile, this month's Education Vital Signs supplement provides you with a look back at the year that was 2008 through the eyes of various researchers and reports. Written by Lawrence Hardy, it is a valuable read with plenty of lessons of its own.

We are fortunate to have a staff that has writers like Del and Larry, and we hope you enjoy their work. I know I certainly do.

Until next month ...

*Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief*