

FROM THE EDITOR

Changes and 'Children'



I'll never forget Mr. Fisher. He was the World War II veteran who survived the Bataan Death March, only to be faced with teaching a trade to unruly middle-schoolers.

And then there were students like me, the ones who could hit everything except the nail with a hammer. Mr. Fisher smiled, showing some patience, knowing that I would get out of his class and never return to the vocational trades. Thanks to him, I survived shop.

It is doubtful that the Mr. Fishers of the world would be as successful in the career and technical education programs of today. Teaching the trades now involves computer skills, advanced technical wisdom, and higher order thinking skills far beyond those of the vocational programs of the 1970s and '80s.

As Managing Editor Kathleen Vail writes in her cover story, "A Changing World," career and technical education is now center stage in the high school reform arena, with an emphasis on making school more relevant to students. The story is especially timely, coming in the wake of a controversial report by the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce that calls for radical changes in how schools operate, especially at the high school level.

The New Commission report, released in mid-December, will be discussed and debated in districts across the nation in the coming months. It speaks in draconian terms about the

future of the workforce in the United States if the status quo is maintained. But, as "A Changing World" tells us, many schools already are doing something about it.

Stay tuned...

Also in this month's issue is the second part of Senior Editor Lawrence Hardy's series on "Children at Risk." This month's installment starkly focuses on how children are caught in the middle of the struggles of a low-income, Washington, D.C., neighborhood plagued by violence.

It is sad, fascinating, and ultimately essential reading for anyone who cares about children mired in the seemingly endless circle of poverty and violence. It will make you angry and inspire you at the same time.

Finally, we would like to welcome some 20,000 new readers to our pages for the first time. Superintendents and school board members from districts that are part of NSBA's National Affiliate program are now receiving the magazine as part of their benefits package. Top-level administrators in these districts also are welcome to our pages.

Please tell us what you think of the magazine, join the *ASBJ* Reader Panel, and visit our website, which will be revamped and relaunched later this spring.

Until next month...

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