

2001: a MinnSPRA Odyssey
through the looking glass
of

1984

Today, 1984 is a dim memory of past days. Most of the letter and some of the senior class in our high schools were born in that long ago "Year of the School", when technology and curriculum we take for granted today were almost non-existent, but who would have guessed the extent of change, for example, in use of technology in our schools. "Book" readers in lecture classrooms were still manual, computers in the classroom were still almost unknown. Now e-mail and v-mail give such easy access they are sometimes considered a nuisance. Oh, how change impacts. What will we see in 2020? it's a relevant question for all of us to consider today.

The stories above, like positive school public relations, are timeless. Do take quality time to look back at what we thought was important in 1984. It is a great baseline from which to look forward in your own Odyssey of relationship with your public.


Dick Bernard, MinnSPRA president
March 23, 2001

Who said this on
Minnesota YEAR OF THE SCHOOL posters
in 1984?

(DON'T CHEAT! TRY FIRST. Answers on page 25)

- A. "School was my passport from poverty."
- B. "She opened up the world to me."
- C. "I was too stupid to benefit from school."
- D. "It is a blessing to feel worthy when you're young and so shy."
- E. "My education is what is going to carry me through life."

MinnSPRA: An unconventional retrospective 1984

In our archives, now in yours, is a rather long set of ideas generated for the Minnesota Year of the School, which began in the summer of 1984. (See pages 4-25). MinnSPRA and its members were heavily involved in planning and implementing this magnificent idea.

The 1984 ideas are on the following pages, reprinted exactly as received by then-Minnesota School personnel. They are a gift to you... and a challenge... to use as a foundation for building your own ongoing "Year of the School". (Once you build your own plan, please share with us!)

The title page of this document is no accident - borrowed from literature and film titles of the past: Many have seen Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the popular 1968 film. Children loved Adventures in Wonderland and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* when Lewis Carroll wrote them in the early 1860s.

George Orwell's book, *1984*, was published in 1949 when I was 9 years old. "Back then", it was hard to even imagine 1984. Even in 1960, when MinnSPRA was founded, 1984 was still a quarter century away. (The number, 1984, which appears in this document, as well as the page numbers, were typed, thanks to my teacher-daughter Joni Hagebock, on a vintage 1960-era Royal manual typewriter, once used by typing students at Anoka High School. In 1960, electric typewriters were not yet common. Today, even electric typewriters are becoming antiques!)

Today, 1984 is a dim memory of past days. Most of the Junior and some of the Senior classes in our high schools were born in that long-ago "Year of the School". Much technology and curriculum we take for granted today were known then, but who would have guessed the extent of change, for example, in use of technology in our schools. "Back then" telephones in teacher classrooms were still unusual; computers in the classroom were still almost unknown. Now e-mail and v-mail give such easy access they are sometimes considered a nuisance! Oh, how change impacts. What will we see in 2020?! It's a relevant question for all of us to consider today.

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Dick Bernard, MinnSPRA president
March 23, 2001

About the Minnesota School Public Relations Association (MinnSPRA)

We're primarily school PR professionals in Minnesota, but also include a very healthy mix of Community Education, Superintendents, School Board members, School Support Personnel, Professors, Private Consultants, and others...even a few retirees. Most of our members live in the seven county Twin Cities area, but over a fourth live in greater Minnesota. Most are women, but over a fourth are men. We share a passion for positive school public relations.

We began February 9, 1960, at a small meeting in St. Paul, and we have been leaders in school public relations in Minnesota ever since. For most of these years, we have been affiliated with the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), and every year since 1978 we have received NSPRA's Blue Ribbon Award in recognition of excellence. This year will be the third time (the previous two were 1967 and 1982) that we have hosted NSPRA's annual Summer Seminar. Do plan to attend "Wildly Fun in '01" (www.nspr.org or www.minnspra.org for details).

We possess the usual attributes of an organization: members, dues, a board, meetings, conferences and workshops, a newsletter, awards....

But we are unusual, too: our chapter has a history of exceptionally strong member involvement and achievement including, most recently, our very highly regarded school marketing program "Selling the Invisible", based on the book of the same name by Harry Beckwith.

MinnSPRA possesses the hallmark qualities of an organization which not only survives, but thrives through generations of change: we are inclusive, and not dependent on a single person or group for leadership, program or continuity. We have been willing to change with the times.

If you are currently a member of MinnSPRA, Thank You. To all our active members through all the years, a special thanks. For those active in 2000-2001, extra special thanks.

If you aren't a member, give us a look - www.minnspra.org.

MinnSPRA's 2000-01 Board: Dick Bernard, Woodbury, president;
Barbara Nicol, Barbara Nicol Public Relations, Minneapolis, president-elect;
Nancy Kracke, Chaska, past-president; Joan O'Fallon, Forest Lake, Secretary;
Karen George, Anoka-Hennepin, Treasurer;
Shirley Nygaard, Brooklyn Center, Membership;
Barbara Brown, Prior Lake-Savage, director;
Sylvia Burgos-Toftness, Stillwater, director; Eileen Harvala, Hopkins, director;
Susan Brott, White Bear Lake, director; Don Kramlinger, Hastings, director;
Barbara Olson, Mound-Westonka, director; Linda Swanson, Lakeville, director;
Bob Noyed, Brooklyn Center, Communications Resources for Schools, NSPRA VP.
Joining the Board in 2001-2002: Cheri Reese, Minneapolis, president-elect;
Mary Elrod, South Washington County, director;
Beth Johnson, St. Louis Park, director; Jackie Colby, Shakopee, director.

Meet The Presidents of MinnSPRA

- 1960-62 Dick Nielsen, St. Paul
1962-64 Dora Mary Macdonald, Duluth
1964-65 O.H. Anderson, Mahtomedi
1965-67 Warren Johnson, Osseo/St. Cloud State
1967-68 Dale Prosser, Hastings
1968-69 Bruce Bauer, Osseo
1969-71 Jim Lee, State Department of Education
1971-72 Armi Nelson, Edina
1972-73 Mary Lindskog, Robbinsdale
1973-74 John Weins, Anoka-Hennepin
1974-75 Don Heintzman, Bloomington
1975-76 Mike Torkelson, MSBA
1976-77 Betty Townsend, Richfield
1977-78 Norm Maguire, Little Falls
1978-79 Nancy Kracke, St. Louis Park
1979-80 John Urseth, Elk River
1980-81 Donna Ford, Southwest ECSU
1981-82 Judi Mollerus, ASPR, Minnetonka
1982-83 Dawn McDowell, ASPR, Roseville¹
1983-84 Dr. Tom Fish, College of St. Thomas
1984-85 Judy Fletcher, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale
1985-86 Bridget Gothberg, Buffalo
1986-87 Bob Krocak, Hennepin Technical Colleges
1987-88 Stan Peichel, Anoka-Hennepin
1988-89 Ann Voels, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
1989-90 Don Kramlinger, Hastings²
1990-91 Mary Powell, Wayzata
1991-92 Addie Mattson, Bloomington
1992-93 Sonia Bjorgen, Mounds View
1993-94 Sherrill Sparks, West St. Paul
1994-95 Gretchen Tiberghien, St. Cloud State University
1995-96 Judy Schell, Eden Prairie
1996-97 Gary Kubat, Burnsville
1997-98 Bob Noyed, Robbinsdale
1998-99 Mary Olson, Anoka-Hennepin
1999-2000 Nancy Kracke, Chaska
2000-2001 Dick Bernard, Retired, Education Minnesota
2001-2002 Barbara Nicol, Barbara Nicol Public Relations, Minneapolis
2002-2003 Cheri Reese, Minneapolis

¹ President of National School Public Relations Association, 1987-88

² Don also is a past president of Minnesota and National Community Education Associations, and is a current MinnSPRA Board member.



Minnesota Coalition For Public Education

1910 West County Road B, Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Minnesota Association of
School Administrators

August 3, 1984

Minnesota Association of
Secondary School
Principals

Minnesota Chapter of the
National School Public
Relations Association

Minnesota Community
Education Association

Minnesota Department
of ~~Education~~

Minnesota Education
Association

Minnesota Elementary
School Principals
Association

Minnesota Federation
of Teachers

Minnesota Parent-
Teacher-Student
Association

Minnesota School
Boards Association

Retired Educators
Association of
Minnesota

Dear Educator:

Governor Perpich has declared 1984-85 to be "The Year of the School." Using the campaign theme "Ah - Those Marvellous Minnesota Schools," each school and school district now has a year-long opportunity to focus attention on the positive things happening in our schools.

You'll find this packet full of ideas and activities designed to help you make the most of "The Year of the School." Whether this year becomes school-focused in your community depends largely on your creativity and enthusiasm.

The Minnesota Coalition for Public Education will be running periodic ads all year long designed to remind citizens that our schools are turning out good "products." In addition to these ads, we've suggested monthly themes designed to call attention to specific components of your school district. We hope you'll use these themes and one or two of the suggested activities to recognize the talents and contributions of teachers, students, parents, community leaders, businesses, and others who support education.

We have so much to be proud of in Minnesota Schools. Show off! Crow! Tell your neighborhood, your community and the entire state just how good things really are in your classrooms. Use the enthusiasm you build as a base of support for new ideas. The challenges we face are more easily solved when we're backed by our communities.

Backing comes in a variety of ways. The Coalition would like to express its gratitude to Campbell-Mithun, Inc., the Minneapolis advertising agency which so generously donated time to develop the "Year of the School" theme and the accompanying graphics.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact any of the Coalition representatives, myself or Dawn McDowell, Coalition Chairperson, (612) 925-4300.

Enjoy this "Year of the School." Make it yours. Make it special.

Warm regards,

Nancy Kracke, Chairperson
Year of the School 1984-85



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1910 West County Road B, Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Minnesota Association of School Administrators

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

Minnesota Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association

Minnesota Community Education Association

Minnesota Department of Education

Minnesota Education Association

Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association

Minnesota Federation of Teachers

Minnesota Parent-Teacher-Student Association

Minnesota School Boards Association

Retired Educators Association of Minnesota

Minnesota School Food Service Association

Minnesota Administrators of Special Education

March, 1985

Dear Friend:

The Year of the School campaign has been a great success and the credit belongs to you. Our clipping service is being kept busy cutting articles out of newspapers all over the state highlighting programs, projects, events...all mentioning the Year of the School in Minnesota...all focusing on the positive things happening in our public schools.

We are proud to send to you the second in a series of five ads that we hope you will use during your local Year of the School campaign. This one features Governor Rudy Perpich. When you read the copy I think you'll agree that the ad is a powerful testimony to the impact of education in the life of a child.

You'll be happy to know that the Linda Kelsey ad ran in more than 60 newspapers throughout the state. We're hoping for even broader coverage for this one.

In a few weeks we'll be sending additional ads featuring famous Minnesotans. Included in our series are Eric Severied, Garrison Keillor, and Dave Winfield. I want to again acknowledge the efforts of Campbell-Mithun, Inc. in preparing this outstanding campaign. Their help and enthusiasm has been wonderful.

The Year of the School is far from over. The year 1985 offers wonderful opportunities to celebrate public education. Look for an announcement later this year about a Year of the School event scheduled for autumn, 1985. It will be a chance for all of us to get together again as we did in August to conclude our celebration with the same sense of togetherness we experienced when we began.

Thank you once again for your energy and support. You are one of the most marvelous parts of "those marvelous Minnesota Schools."

Warm Regards,

Nancy Kracke

Nancy Kracke, Chairperson
Year of the School Campaign

NK:mr

Ah,
those marvelous
Minnesota schools!

Working with the News Media

The "Year of the School" has a lot of shine, but it can't sparkle without the cooperation of the TV, radio, and newspapers in your community.

Our goal is to build support for education, particularly from those who do not have children in school. Research tells us that the best source of information about schools is the news media. Here are some suggestions for working with the media this year:

- o Send the sample news release to your local media now. An announcement now sets the stage for the year.
- o Ask to sit down with reporters individually to review the "Year of the School" campaign. Alert them to the monthly themes. Ask them to consider developing features around them, and suggest topics from your schools.
- o Plan "Year of the School" events far enough in advance to give the media notice. Don't expect coverage on the spur of the moment.
- o Ask your local radio and TV stations to devote some public service time to students and schools. Get students involved in taping some PSAs.
- o Maintain regular contact all year long with the media. Keep their interest going by feeding them information and ideas.
- o Invite a representative of the local media to serve on a "Year of the School Task Force."
- o Look for opportunities to get staff members on radio and television talk shows. It gives staff the recognition they need while getting important information into the community.
- o Ask the paper to allow students to produce a page of the paper once or twice during the year in order to report on "Year of the School" activities from their point of view.
- o Send thank you notes to editors, publishers, station managers, reporters, etc., for good coverage. Like educators, the news media is not on the receiving end of too many compliments. It means a lot to have the good we do recognized. Consider sending both personal notes and letters to be run on the editorial page.
- o Don't forget to let the Minnesota Department of Education know about the ways you're celebrating "Year of the School." By sharing in Education Update, you'll be sharing with all of us. Also consider submitting your news to the newsletter of your professional organizations.

September

Parents as Partners

- o Involve parents in planning your annual Open House.
- o Hold a coffee party for new parents.
- o Allow parents to take mini-courses with their children.
- o Invite realtors to take a tour of your schools.
- o Invite Chamber of Commerce officials to have coffee with the principal. Ask students to tell them what they are learning in school.
- o Declare an emergency (first aid) awareness day and invite parents and children to participate.
- o Invite parents to take part in field trips sponsored by school.
- o Organize a "Happiness is Grandparents" or "Foster-grandparents" day.
- o Invite Grandmas and Grandpas to share school lunch.
- o Host a "Doughnuts for Dads" Day.
- o Guest of the day--invite business leaders to school lunch.
- o Invite secondary parents to come to school and follow their child's curriculum for part of the day.
- o Invite each parent to participate in small group meetings with the principal/staff.
- o Invite parents to hear an impromptu band concert put on by junior high students.
- o Invite parents to the gym for a gymnastic exhibition.
- o Have an open door visitation policy in which parents are always welcome.

