

# NEWSLETTER

## WHY STUDENT ACTIVITIES?

by Nancy and Tom Jandris / Reprinted from the Student Advocate

Have you ever wondered why student activity programs were introduced to our nation's schools? Why were the budgets for the programs expanded in the seventies? And, what is the significance of the recent student activity budget cuts being made by many schools?

Student activity programs have been an integral part of both large and small high schools for many decades. These programs include the interschoolastic athletic teams, fine and performing arts programs, clubs, speech and debate teams, intramural programs, and student governments.

What once may have started as "something to do" activities have turned into programs that enhance and enrich the lives of students and their communities. To emphasize this view, Scott Thomsom, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, once said, "More and more studies reveal that a student's participation in student activities is one of the most important facets of a secondary school education." Consider the following points:

- A few years ago, the America Testing Service completed a study comparing four factors thought to be possible predictors of student's success in later life. Those factors were: achievement in student activities, high scores on the American College Test (ACT), and top grades in high school and college. The results of their research indicated that the only factor that was a valid predictor of success was "achievement in student activities."
  - Similarly, a College Entrance Examination Board study examined the validity and reliability of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in predicting how successful a person might be at a chosen career upon graduation from college. The results showed that there was virtually no correlation between scores on the SAT and such success. The researchers did conclude, however, that those students who were "highly involved" in student activities were more likely to be successful.
- Parents and students alike also seem to perceive that co-curricular participation is important. In some cases, that only view of the school parents may get is through their children's involvement in a club, sport, or performance. Students rarely

bubble over at the dinner table with, "Gee folks, you oughta see what a neat thing I learned today about the Periodic Table of the Elements!"

### Why Do Students Partipate?

In a recent Gallup poll, students were asked why they participated in student activity programs. More than 90 percent marked as "important" the following reasons:

- For personal achievement (97 percent)
- For fun and personal achievement (95 percent)
- To have an outlet for individual needs and interests (95 percent)
- For experiences not available in the regular school program (92 percent)
- To broaden personal and social contacts (91 percent)
- To develop leadership skills (90 percent)
- To earn letters, awards, and prizes (90 percent)

In a later question, students were asked how best to establish status and acceptance among their peers. In responding, 56 percent marked "participating in student activities" as opposed to "earning high grades" marked by 19 percent. About one-half of the students in the nation devoted four or more hours per week to the student activity program; and, 54 percent spend in excess of \$100 per school year on those activities. (Gholson, 1979)

In the same Gallup report, some 50 percent of parents with children currently in school regarded student activity programs as "very important" in the education of their children. An additional 40 percent responded that such programs were "fairly important". Parents, like their children, believethat both immediate and long-range benefits are to be gained through participation in the co-curriculum. Still, the function, place, and failure of these programs remain uncertain.

### It's Worth the Effort

Even though the importance of co-curricular activities is recognized by everyone involved, increasing these activities and maintaining them is becoming more and more difficult. Spiraling inflation and votes against school bond referenda that would strengthen such programs have had their effect.

The following points outline the advantages of the co-curricular program. These ideas may be helpful when trying to oppose budget cuts. For example, the pro-activities speaker may point out that student activities:

1. *Provide healthful alternatives for the use of leisure time.* Student activity participation is one of the most fundamental methods by which students perpare for wise and fulfilling use of leisure time, an important function in a world where there is ever-increasing leisure time.

2. *Develop school pride and school spirit.* Student activity programs will result in a growing commitment by students to the schools and school-related activities. In schools with comprehensive student activity programs, measurable and significant decreases in vandalism have been reported.

3. *Respond to diversity.* Every area of the high school curriculum should have one or more programs to meet the diverse needs and desires of students with various abilities and interests. The student acitivity philosophy best addresses the need for diversity at the high school level.

4. *Improve school/community relations.* Student activities that are open to the entire community, such as musicals, athletic events, and theatre, help to bring the schools and public together in an enjoyable experience. Some programs can even invite participation by non-students. Community fun runs, winter carnivals, or open theatre are examples.

5. *Improve self-concept.* Student activities provide an important media in which to experience the pain and pleasure of contending with others' points of view.

6. *Increase visibility in the community for the school.* Not only do students enthusiastically talk about their co-curricular experiences, but publicity from student activities often has broad public appeal.

Nancy Jandris is the director of student activities at Downers Grove North HS in Downers Grove, Ill.

Tom Jandris is the principal at Barrington HS in Barrington, Ill.

# O.I.R.A. CONSULTANTS

The Ontario region of CIRA has set up intramural consultants in various areas throughout the province. The areas used are the same as the O.F.S.A.A. districts.

If you need to know something about membership in OIRA/CIRA, are looking for new ideas for your intramural program, or need some information about running an intramural workshop, contact the consultant closest to you. Listed below are the OIRA Consultants.

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## Intramurals As An Alternative

by Aarne Hannikainen, Haileybury School of Mines

Is your intramural program a viable alternative to drug and alcohol use or is it actually inducing your students to use them?

Some of your policies on scheduling awards, activity selection, etc. can be acting as motivators for the participant to consume alcohol or drugs. Scheduling activities on a Friday night at 9:30 p.m. could produce participant behavior quite different from one scheduled for a lunch break during the week. Your awards presentation of cooler bags, beer mugs, etc. are definitely delivering a message to the student.

Look beyond the mechanics of your intramural program, and consider the emotional needs of the participant. What is he looking for from your program, from alcohol and drugs? Look also at what he is actually getting from your program and from drugs and alcohol.

I feel, as educators, we have a responsibility to provide an intramural program

that is designed to induce an alternate behavior to drugs and alcohol use.

This alternate behavior can be accomplished if the intramural program has identified, and is satisfying, the needs the student is attempting to satisfy through drugs and alcohol.

If the student is given free choice between any two activities, or things, the one satisfying the more important needs or wants is the one selected. The same choice holds true for intramurals and alcohol and drugs. If your intramural program satisfies all the needs sought for with alcohol and drugs, the intramural program then has a chance to be chosen by the student.

If, when designing your program, you have not considered the wants and needs achieved or apparently achieved through drugs and alcohol use, then the student will choose drugs or alcohol to satisfy these needs. Your program has failed to provide an alternative, or perhaps provided such a poor al-

ternative that the choice was to be obvious.

Not only does the intramural program have to satisfy the drug and alcohol needs and motives in order to have an equal chance of being chosen, but it must be perceived as being better, so that it will be chosen.

In order to be a viable alternative, the student would view the intramural program or activity an acceptable and attractive alternative which must be realistic, attainable and meaningful.<sup>(1)</sup>

The alternatives provided by your intramural program should consider the individual's needs, and help people to find self-understanding, improved self image, expanded awareness, or new experiences which they seek through drugs and alcohol.<sup>(1)</sup>

Take a look at your program. What have you got? What do you want?

Reference 1 - **Drug Abuse - Intramurals - A Viable Alternative.** P.R. Varnes, Siegfred W. Fagerberg.



## "Animated Intramurals"



Remember the "Spirit of 81"? What spirit team were you part of? The Dolly Partons, the Richard Nixons, the Elvis Presleys? What activities did you enjoy the most?

- major sessions
- minis
- guest speaker
- spirit games
- penny carnival
- swap night
- 50's dance
- discussion groups
- clothes relay (fruit of the loom was a clear winner)

are under way to make this year's conference even bigger and better than last year's!

What's in store for you at "Animated Intramurals":

- guest speaker
- major and mini sessions
- Looney Tunes
- Andy Capp Nite
- Intramural Smorgasborg (poster presentation)
- Innovative games
- sharing of ideas
- socials

If you were part of the "Spirit of 81" then you will remember the fantastic three days of learning and sharing with other Intramuralists from across Ontario and other parts of Canada.

This year's Intramural Conference Committee wants to invite you to attend "Animated Intramurals" at Geneva Park on April 26, 27 and 28. Plans

This is no "Mickey Mouse" conference. We feel that this conference will be educational, thought provoking and fun. Intramuralists from this province are great people who have a lot to share. Plan to attend this year's conference and make a contribution to Intramurals in Ontario.

See you at Geneva Park in April.

Intramurally yours,  
**Organizing Committee**

*Meg Innes  
Fred Wannamaker  
Gail Nesrallah  
Jean Kennedy  
Bob Boucher  
Barb McIntyre  
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### CONFERENCE FEE:

before March 14	
CIRA members	\$130.00
non-members	\$140.00
after March 14	\$ 10.00 extra

## Update By Regional Director

Jean Kennedy

The semi-annual meetings for CIRA occurred in late November and a great deal of business was covered in the 3 days of meetings. CIRA president, Ian McGregor, did an outstanding job in keeping the meetings on topic as can be attested in the 24 pages of minutes.

The following items were covered in length and are of specific interest to Ontario members:

1. **Membership Fees** - as of April 1, 1982, a CIRA membership will be \$15.00 for a professional and \$10.00 for a student. CIRA is a professional organization that now offers its members much in the way of booklets, information bulletins and newsletters. A CIRA membership also includes membership in OIRA so you are getting 2 for the price of one! One new addition is that membership renewals will be on a revolving basis so that when you join you get a full year subscription.

2. **In 1984**, Ontario will be hosting the 6th annual Canadian Conference at Geneva Park. Much preparation will be needed to host this event and it will be a topic of discussion at the Annual General Meeting on April 27 at Geneva Park.

3. **A new intramural text** dealing with elementary intramurals will be printed by CIRA and will be ready in late April. Look for more details in the near future.

The Ontario Intramural Consultants in the OFSAA areas are hard at work on behalf of OIRA - CIRA. They are available if you are needing some help or suggestions in running your program.

OIRA pins are now available. They are the same design as our new logo and will be on sale at the Geneva Park Conference. The cost is only \$2.00.

The Annual General Meeting will be an important one this year. The proposed OIRA constitution will be presented to the membership for final approval. For a copy of this document, contact Meg Innes at York University.

Money is available from OIRA if you are organizing an intramural workshop. A maximum of \$200.00 can be obtained for assistance in running a workshop. Contact Jean Kennedy at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute for more information.

## Editor's Note

I would personally like to thank Labatt's Ontario Breweries, and in particular Lube Koval, for their continued support of OIRA and this newsletter, in its second year of publication. Their interest in the area of intramurals and recreation in Ontario is of mutual benefit to the association and Labatt's.

The newsletter is always looking for articles of interest to OIRA members. If you have a new idea or an activity that has been successful in your school, then share it with others by writing to me. One of the things that makes this association successful is the sharing of ideas among the members. Through sharing and exchanging, intramurals and recreation in the educational system will flourish and our young people will benefit through increased fitness and an active lifestyle.

# Want Some Leaders? - How About A Camp!

by Gerry Hancock, Rideau Valley Middle School

Last August six students from the Intramural Council at Rideau Valley went to camp. That sounds a lot better than saying they came back to school early, but that's exactly what they did.

We had heard about the Leadership Camps for high school I.M. Councils, but not Elementary. We were curious to see if it would work. It would be nicer to help students with their new jobs in a relaxed setting rather than the hustle of the first few weeks of school. Most of all we heard that a cohesive group feeling would develop in our "captive audience". When school started, there would be many things to do, for them and for staff, without trying to break the ice with a new group.

After checking the prices of camps in the area, (ridiculous) we decided to use the school. It was free, and turned out to be ideal. The Home Ec. Room became our kitchen and eating area. The Stage and Library became the sleeping rooms and the Staff Room our Lounge. In addition, the gym and outdoor equipment was well used. Showers, Intramural Office, telephones, photocopiers were extra benefits we never thought we needed. A neighbour near the school generously donated some swimming pool time.

Quite an amount of the time was spent on "Intramural Jobs" as we called them. After hearing the job descriptions each responsibility was filled. Therefore Convenors, Equipment Manager, Scheduling Committee, Publicity all had a good idea of their job and how it contributed to the group effort. The year was roughly mapped out and the first activities were planned in more detail.

Another large portion of time was spent in "Games". The objective was to get the group to act together as much as possible - to be a leader and to be led. Initiative Games and strategies (e.g. Tent-Raising) were used as well as modified games such as scooter ball. Traditional Games

such as Soccer and a Scavenger Hunt were used as long as they were group-oriented. Even a quiet game at night such as Team-Monopoly was planned to emphasize the group concept.

Cost for the three days and two nights amounted to less than \$100.00. This represented the amount spent for food., since there were few purchases and no rental fees to worry about.

In conclusion, we found the results most gratifying. The dynamics of the group were interesting to watch unfold. Leaders emerged and submerged. The best part was the warmth the group began. The staff and students all knew each other well, and could feel no criticism and give praise.

Come to think of it, they have a pretty darn good Intramural Council.

## To Hell With Intramurals

Meg Innes  
York University

DO NOT sit back and take it any longer. Learn to be aggressive (when no one is watching). Be pleasant with everyone you meet and listen quietly as they reduce your job of working in intramurals to ashes.

When you experience those frustrating moments of mixed up gym time; not enough equipment or not enough money to run a program just grin and say "It's O.K. because I'm an Intramural nut". You can say this with a clear conscience because everyone already knows that you must be nuts to work in the field of intramurals.

BUT; when everyone leaves your office and you are quite alone, close the door, go to your window and open it, stick your head out and yell at the top of your lungs "I'm mad as hell and to hell with intramurals!"

No one will listen to you but you will sure feel better.

### O.I.R.A. PRESENTS



### ANIMATED INTRAMURALS

14th ANNUAL  
O.I.R.A. DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE  
GENEVA PARK  
APRIL 26, 27, 28



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**OIRA** *ontario intramural recreation association*