

## **TED BERGER**

Recently, I was privileged to participate with Jane, Steve Tennen, Tom Cahill, and Randy Bourscheidt in an oral history project - the first part of a documentary project on cultural policy for the New York Public Library. This gathering focused on arts education.

As we were talking, I felt a surge of Proustian memories, triggering thoughts about how we all came to this moment, especially how Jane Remer has been a constant and seminal influence - certainly on me and definitely on this field.

As we discussed how arts and education keeps going – despite whatever seems to get in its way – I realized why it's so appropriate that Jane deserves recognition for her distinguished service as a major Champion of Our Field. Over her extensive career, her spirit, her fight, and her own resiliency – through thick and thin – are touchstones for the field itself and for all of us.

I first met Jane about 40 years ago. I vividly remember the day. I had just started at what-was-then a relatively new organization, the New York Foundation for the Arts. I was there as the country's first statewide coordinator for a program the NEA was expanding to all states, then called "Artists in Schools." I'd been invited to some meeting hosted, I believe, at the top of Two Times Square.

Bored by the platitudes I was hearing at the meeting, I began gazing around the room to see who might be feeling the same way. And that's how I met Jane. She too was looking around, similarly agitated; we smiled, and after the event was over, we began talking...and we've been talking - and arguing - and collaborating in many ways ever since.

Jane was then at the JDR3 Fund, working with the legendary Kathy Bloom on projects throughout the country under the mantra, "All the Arts for All the Children." I'm sure Jane regarded me as a rookie, a new kid to be recruited for the cause - ready for basic training. A lot of what I was observing until then about artists in schools seemed to be more like throwing-creative-mud-on-the-walls-hoping-it-might-stick. There seemed to be little strategy and little knowledge of the complexities of working with schools. Sure, often good things were happening to kids with lots of smiles on their faces, but I was searching for ways of making those good things and those smiles last.

Jane sensed that in me, and soon NYFA and I were involved in the major initiative she was developing here in NYC, the AGE Program (the Arts in General Education project). This was a citywide effort, developed in collaboration with the then NYC Board of Education and Edythe Gaines, the incomparable head of the Learning Cooperative, and her colleagues, headed by another good friend and colleague, Carol Fineberg. This school network marked, as far as I know, the first comprehensive NYC effort to link the arts into education in any systemic way that seemed to have real meaning for schools, teachers, and principals. For me, at last, I discovered a deeper way of integrating artists and arts organizations into schools on an ongoing basis.

The invaluable lessons I learned during this AGE process and through Jane's mentoring informed many other programs and strategies I've tried to develop over the years as I became more involved in other issues regarding artists, the arts, and communities.

Jane is the steadfast Keeper of the Flame for the possibilities inherent in "All the Arts for All the Children." For decades she's written, consulted, blogged, cajoled, complained, provoked. And sometimes she's a real pain as she's pushed this Sisyphean Arts and Education Rock up a very jagged hill. Her influence has only grown, impacting multiple generations of educators, artists, arts professionals, and community movers and shakers. She is one of our field's valiant survivors and invaluable thought-leaders.

Jane's belief in the importance of this cause is unshakeable. In good times, she's challenged any assumptions of success; in bad times, she's forced us all to rethink strategies and to dig down deeply inside ourselves and fight for what we know is true.

Many years ago, I had the privilege of meeting one of Jane's mentors, the late John Goodlad, the renowned educational researcher and theorist for educational renewal who, I believe, helped to shape, much of Jane's thinking about school change. I remember John talking about the importance and power of peer networks. (..networks just like ATA and the Roundtable.)

John said, "We don't mind being crazy and lonely as long as we know there are others out there feeling crazy and lonely too!" This remark has always stayed with me, so much so that I've used it as a title for a speech I'm often asked to give. It so aptly describes the importance of finding strength with colleagues and pals with whom we can feel safe as we struggle in our individual and collective efforts to make any kind of difference.

It is lonely being "crazy," especially in this field! That's why we need each other - and why we need to come together as a community on occasions like this to take time to celebrate the real pioneers of our field who macheted the path so we might move more easily.

With very few others on whom she could lean, Jane Remer has made it possible for so many more of us to forge ahead.

With her tough-minded, argumentative manner (after all, her father was a lawyer!), with the determination of the dancer that she was and always will be, Jane choreographed our field. She's built the case, conceived the programs, and developed the tactics for making things happen. She's made us all feel less lonely and crazy - and stronger - because she keeps challenging us to get off our high horses and move our butts to work harder than we think we can possibly ever do to effect change.

Maybe all the arts for all the kids haven't yet been achieved as comprehensively and as continually as we would all like, but with-out Jane Remer's leadership over so many decades, I can't imagine where we'd be now!

Jane is in the throes of planning a new book. Periodically, we meet to review her progress and clarify dates (as best as the two of us can still recall). But this is no trip down Memory Lane. Rather she keeps pushing and pushing forward. Jane is our eternal provocateur, simultaneously our keeper of the flame and our flame-thrower. She is our cheerleader and our quarterback. We are damn lucky to have her in our midst!

And I am so, so grateful that she's been my colleague and my good and dear friend these many crazy years. I'm really thrilled to join you tonight in celebrating her!

## **ERIC BOOTH**

I picture Jane in the middle of a packed Empire State Partnership workshop at Sarah Lawrence College. In a kind of living room, people are packed onto couches and chairs, sitting on the floor, standing against the walls. She was urging this group of committed Teaching Artists, teachers and administrators to go further, to be more ambitious, but to be savvy in assessing the learning that was happening in their programs. Jane was at her best: full of down to earth practical suggestion, fully attuned to the realities of their school situations and determined that they could take a next step, with great handouts, compassionate for the complexity of the issues and clear in laying them out, blunt in dismissing suggestions that took the group in an unproductive direction, and smart, smart, smart. Oh, how much most people in that room, in most of the hundreds of such rooms she has led over decades, loved Jane.

Of all the contributions Jane has made to arts education over the years—from the foundation-building books, to the speeches of leadership, to the projects she has shaped, to the private guidance she has provided to countless programs and individuals, and a dozen other ways she has been out front and consistent—I envision those multi-hour workshops in packed rooms (packed because they would have a chance to be close to Jane) as the symbol and celebration of her life of impact.

## **DALE DAVIS**

Last year the Association of Teaching Artists began The Legacy Project with the goal of collecting data, paying tribute, acknowledge, and honoring the individuals, organizations, and agencies that have paved the path to support the work of artists working in education and in communities, those individuals and organizations who have advanced Teaching Artists careers through broadening opportunities for work and through funding. Where to begin?

With Jane Remer's A Brief History of Artists in K-12 American Schooling." *Teaching Artists Journal*, Volume I, Number 2, 2003. Jane was the first to look historically, to get it down and published. Artists in education were not to be invisible.

"And what are you trying to do, how will you know if you have done it?"

Jane Remer introduced rigor to the work of artists in education. Look at what you are doing? What do you want to accomplish? She is a current running through so many of us through the Empire State Partnerships. My own first encounter involved Jane tearing into everything I was doing with the New York State Literary Center in arts in corrections. Jane questioned our project. I was devastated. It was an assessment that forced me to look deeper, to question, and to take apart what I was doing in terms of what I wanted to accomplish.

Thank you Jane Remer!

Thank you Jane Remer for taking arts education and the role of artists in it seriously, holding us to rigorous standards, and pushing and pushing us forward.

Thank you!

## **CAROL FINEBERG**

I first met Jane when she was a petite blonde dynamo as a member of the Dance Department at the now defunct but then very popular Shaker Village Work Camp. The camp was a haven for teenagers who tried to emulate a utopian community based on Shaker principles combined with democratic socialism and energized by burgeoning hormones!

I next met Jane when she was a parent of two kids attending the High School of Music and Art (LaGuardia HS of ...). She was then working for Mark Schubart at what was then called Lincoln Center Institute, a source of performances and visits by teaching artists to subscribing schools. She helped me program a visit to Lincoln Center for students during our Operation School-Out, when all the students chose special events and opportunities to take the place of going to regular classes during the week of auditions for the new class of art and music majors.

I really got to know Jane when she was working for the JDR3rd Fund (one of the Rockefeller philanthropies that boosted the importance of arts education in its many guises.) I had discovered her involvement with NYC's public schools when I was assigned to the Learning Co-op, an offshoot of the

NYC Board of Education. It was then that I realized that Jane was the Jane Weissman of Shaker Village Days! What a surprise! This Jane Remer person then became one of the more constant parts of not only my life but also the lives of many principals and teachers, Teaching Artists and arts organizations, and advocates for a fuller, more rigorous arts education. Jane went on to write articles for the JDR3rd Fund, and upon leaving, wrote and edited chapters of an extremely popular book, *Beyond Enrichment: Building Effective Arts Partnerships with Schools and Your Community*, published by the American Council for the Arts. Note that in 1996, the concept of "partnerships" and "community" were already concepts at work in efforts to elevate both teaching and learning of all subjects through engaging kids in making and responding to the creative arts. Working with Jane opened a whole new career for me resulting in my assuming and then after a few years leaving my role as the first Project Manager -- an awful title -- of the Board of Ed's innovative Arts in General Education (AGE) program. AGE was an effort to highlight how the arts contributed to better schools, more and better performances and exhibits of children's art, music, dance, theater and literary endeavors, and a climate that valued the arts as part of each child's heritage. Jane was cheerleader, documenter, and supporter of principals as learners, translating her understanding of the arts and the role of teaching artists so that principals could embrace the notion that school time spent on the arts was an intrinsic part of the education menu, and not just a "frill," or a pleasant departure from the "real" work of education.

When I left the BOE, now called the DOE, I found evidence of Jane's influence in almost every place I visited. Jane was tough in those days, and persistent. As we look back on her long and outstanding career, we can thank her for those qualities that helped pave the way for the many excellent practitioners, nation-wide, who work and play in elementary, high schools and college united in advancing the common mission of providing "all the arts for all the children," a mantra initiated while she was at the JDR3rd Fund many years ago.

## **ARLENE JORDAN**

It is with great pleasure that I share my thoughts about Jane Remer. In 1997 as I was transitioning from the DOE to the non-profit world, I was sitting at a meeting when my friend pointed to Jane and whispered, "There's a woman you must know." There was an immediate chemistry when Jane and I connected a few weeks later, a strong bond that continues to grow.

Jane is one of a kind. For six decades she devoted her life to arts education. She sets the bar high and brings her fierce passion into everything she does. Her rich history performing as a dancer and actor and her love of literature and of all performing arts keeps her eye and heart on the importance of artistry. Jane emphasizes the need for all of us in the field to work towards 'all the arts for all the children.' She often speaks about the importance of valuing the voice of the classroom and specialist teachers and administrators. Rather than focusing on challenges and feeling defeated when times get tough, Jane keeps a high spirit and inspires us to look beyond the struggles and push ourselves to grow as a unity of thought and action.

Jane and I worked closely over the past ten years at New York City Center to build partnerships, guide artists and teachers and evaluate programs. We observed instruction, created Core Teams, developed interdisciplinary projects, and most recently, established a model for transferring learning from the dance studio to the classroom and back to the studio. Was it always easy? Of course, not! Jane pushed me and my staff out of our comfort zone again and again as we revised and refined our work. Planning a professional development workshop would often require several long meetings. And yet, when I look back, I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. We learned, we grew, we moved "beyond enrichment" and opened up to possibilities never imagined.

At a recent retirement party, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher who Jane worked closely with for several years said, "*The arts partnership changed my life. The PDs were great - I learned, I thought, I got turned on. I now*

*attend every possible Flamenco show and I take acting classes.”* Just imagine this teacher who was nurtured, validated and inspired by Jane. Observing her transferring her inspiration into her teaching practice was remarkable for her personally and, most importantly, for her students. This story is just one small example of the many artists and educators Jane empowered.

Jane is a treasure, a profound teacher with wit and pizzazz, a gift to the world of arts education.

## **DAVID MARQUIS**

Jane has been both a mentor and an inspiration to me. She not only taught me so much about how to look at our and the students' work but taught me so much about the importance of examining that work as a discipline.

## **DAVID O'FALLON, Aka "The Bear"**

Will we ever get there? "There" being the full inclusion of the arts in the common learning and development of our people, young and old. Yes, and when we do we will owe a major thanks to Jane Remer.

Let's give thanks for her and to her now. Her intellect and passion and accomplishments, the —the books, the ideas, the speaking, consulting, the cajoling and challenging—have moved many along the path towards that fulfillment. She was formed as a dancer, and there may be no better foundation for this work than hers, to have been trained and performed as a dancer—with the rigor and demands on body and mind and spirit. I think she is still a dancer, nimble and strong and with the will to move people. Jane, you've moved me—many times. And you've moved others—the work in Beyond Enrichment carved out territory for collaborations between cultural organizations and schools that was not as well defined before you pulled together an extraordinary array of people to write about it. It is still a territory that remains to be fully developed. The maps you've helped create in the books, the thought, the articles, the presentations—are invaluable guides as we continue to explore and build these partnerships. You can be challenging—and thankfully you are—as you asked all to hold high expectations and towards quality. "There" is still being imagined and shaped Jane. And you are and will always be one of the lead explorers. As a dancer, you shaped space and defied gravity with grace and strength. You shaped this space and defied the gravity of institutions stuck in the past. And you have helped many do the same. Thank you. Thank you. Please keep dancing.

## **NAN WESTERVELT**

Jane Remer has been an inspiration to countless numbers dedicated to, as Jane said in 2003, "imaginative arts in education practice." For those of us who toil in the world of arts and education, Jane has encouraged us to keep the flame burning and confront the challenges we face with the same creativity and persistence that we believe everyone gains from being involved with all the arts.

Jane has been a guiding light for so many there is no way my words can truly give justice to the impact she has had on the arts and education field. The person who can help us truly see how Jane has provided us with vision and action is Jane herself. Below is a transcript of a speech given by Jane at the 2003 Common Ground Conference when she was honored by the New York State Alliance for Arts Education. Her words continue to have meaning 13 years later

Jane Remer, "The New Pioneers," Remarks at Common Ground, April 25, 2003.

Looking out at a sea of faces, I am reminded of two great American works, Walt Whitman's poem "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" from *The Leaves of Grass*, and Willa Cather's early novel, *O Pioneers!*

As I consider all of you the new pioneers, I will greet you with a couple of Whitman's stanzas to set the stage for my remarks.

COME, my tan-faced children,  
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready;  
Have you your pistols? Have you your sharp edged axes?  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,  
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,  
We, the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

Almost 40 years ago, I was casting about for a career. Rejecting opportunities to become a professional full-time dancer or actress, I ventured into Yale Law school, taught elementary and high school French, and took any number of career entry jobs in cultural centers, advertising and publishing. I found them all wanting. I was tenuously married, with two young children, and restless, but determined to combine my dual passions for teaching and the arts into some kind of career.

Thus began a winding, largely serendipitous, often bumpy, but ultimately fruitful journey that took me from the Harkness House of Ballet Arts to national and then New York Young Audiences, to Lincoln Center's Education Program, the New York City Board of Education's Learning Cooperative, and finally, to the John D. Rockefeller 3<sup>rd</sup> Fund's Arts in Education Program. There I got to work all around the country with the "mother of us all," Kathryn Bloom, leading education reformers such as John Goodlad, and trail-blazing arts and education evaluators such as Robert Stake. In 1980, a year after Mr. Rockefeller was killed in an auto crash and the Fund closed down, I turned freelance. I served on panels and consulted with the Opera/Music Theater and Arts in Education Programs of the NEA. I wrote and published books and articles, taught, consulted nationally and internationally. In 1985 I became the director of the Capezio/Ballet Makers Dance Foundation, a position I hold today.

In September, when I turned 70, I realized with a shudder that I was one of a few survivors of a brigade of arts in education pioneers whose legacy you all inherit. Today seems an appropriate occasion to share some of the visions of the original pioneers, visions *and* language that have shaped our work. I will conclude by mentioning three tasks that call for our undivided attention if our always fragile field is to survive and draw nearer to what I believe is still its mission:

All the arts for all the children and youth in entire schools, taught by collaborating classroom teachers, arts specialists and Teaching Artists, in institutional partnerships that bring the school into the community and the community and its rich resources into the school.

In these partnerships, instructors teach the arts sequentially as disciplines, they weave the arts as equals into interdisciplinary studies, and they include the community's arts and cultural resources in the general curriculum.

I think our field continues to make progress towards this mission. It's difficult to wed the arts and education in K-12 public schools, and to make the wedding last past the honeymoon. We've certainly come a long way from the idea of the arts as enrichment and entertainment, from the brief encounters with school auditorium performances, art specialists once a week for 20 minutes, or Teaching Artists dropping in once or twice a year. Our own state is in the forefront of imaginative arts in education

practice, as witness the work of, for only three examples, New York City's Project Arts, the Center for Arts Education, and the New York State Council on the Arts' Empire State Program.

Our work is hard because we are trying to embed the arts into the school program, into the very muscle and sinew of the curriculum. As you know, schooling in America is influenced by the tides of political, social and economic events. This phenomenon keeps those of us who work in and with the schools on a perpetual roller coaster, with very little stable ground underneath. One of the lessons we probably need to learn is that, like it or not, we must frequently start over again--and again--to rebuild our programs, restabilize our partnerships, reinvigorate the trust in our alliances. We should take the ever-changing personnel, students and systemic structure in our partnerships as an educational given, regarding the cycle not as a trap or an endless loop, but as an upward spiral.

If you agree that this is the current reality and context of our work, and if you agree that a reasonable goal is to make gradual and incremental progress, then I think there are three tasks we must absolutely attend to as we both reinvent and rethink how the "wheel" carries the chariot forward into ever new terrain. Attending to these tasks will help us build the infrastructure we so desperately need so that we are not perpetually "restoring" the arts in climates and environments that are alternately welcoming and hostile.

First, professional development for administrators, teachers, artists and parents that identifies and facilitates learning to master the commonalties in the field, yet leaves plenty of room for individual philosophies and aesthetic viewpoints.

Next, teaching the practitioners and other participants some of the basic skills in research, assessment and evaluation so they can understand and improve their own practice and build the grass roots case for the value of the arts in the lives of all their students.

Finally, a rededication to teaching the arts as content as well as skills and media for creative thinking and expression. Of course, the arts are natural allies in interdisciplinary study, but we must continue to be vigilant about their integrity, about not using them as mere tools for learning other subjects when it is likely that more time spent studying those other subjects would do as good if not a better job.

Ah, you may well ask, how do you do that? Pioneers! O pioneers!

Let's listen to Whitman's last two stanzas for an answer:

Has the night descended?  
Was the road of late so toilsome? Did we stop discouraged, nodding on  
our way?  
Yet a passing hour I yield you, in your tracks to pause oblivious,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet.  
Far, far off the day-break call – hark! How loud and clear I hear it  
wind;  
Swift! To the head of the army!—swift! Spring to your places,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!