



## **ACA 2001 Conference Highlights**

**St. Paul, Minneapolis**

**April 4-7, 2001**

by Lynne Krause, ACA Executive Director

This year's theme, Creative Odyssey: mind • body • spirit, couldn't have been more appropriate for our first conference in the new millennium. With 3M serving as conference host and Kim Johnson as our conference chair, we were treated to a venue that delivered on all three fronts—mind, body and spirit.

Wednesday night's opening reception started us off with music by Dave Braun & Company Dixieland Jazz whose music set our spirits soaring. There was opportunity for chatting and networking, especially with Dr. Berenice Bleedorn as she challenged our minds with her thoughts on creativity and education. Then our bodies were put through an odyssey going where they had not gone before as Jeff Haebig led us on his Body/Brain Boogie. We were charged, connected and ready to start our Creative Odyssey.

Our first creativity igniter was Craig Elkins whose interactive session on The Little Man's Vision of Cultivating Creative Spirit was both enlightening and fun. The morning was chock full of exciting sessions featuring topics that touched on mind, body and spirit through the lenses of ACA's 4 societies—Business & Industry, Communications & the Arts, Education & Training and Science & Technology.

Ann Herrmann-Nehdi provided us with a high energy igniter session after lunch. Many people were wondering how she could top her rocket building and launch off exercise from ACA's 2000 conference. We were not disappointed. After demonstrating that ACA is in fact a whole brain organization and challenging us to find creative ways to grow ACA, she challenged the tables to a creative bridge building exercise. Creative collaboration abounded and some healthy group competition as well.

After a full day of engaging our mind, body and spirit with the plethora of sessions, we went to the Science Museum of Minnesota for a wonderful Innovators Gala reception hosted by

3M Company. We were treated to presentations by some of 3M's Innovators as they told their stories through the conference paradigm of a creative odyssey. After the formal part of the program we had a chance to chat one-on-one and take a few photos with these remarkable people. Art Fry, best known as the creator of Post-it® Notes, put to rest many of the myths around his famous product and signed a number of autographs as well.

Friday's creativity igniter, futurist Earl Joseph, raised quite a few hackles in the audience as he presented a tour of the most likely future trends in creativity. He showed us some of what already is and what is on the horizon. It led to a lively discussion with the audience especially around tools to amplify creativity—will technology tools replace skills training in music and painting?

David Tanner, former director of DuPont's Center for Creativity & Innovation, was presented with ACA's newly inaugurated Champion of Creativity Award. Tony Le Storti, ACA board member, provided a moving tribute to the tireless efforts of Dave as a Creativity Champion. Dave talked to the audience recounting his opportunities to apply and promote creativity. It was officially announced that the award would be henceforth known as the David Tanner Champion of Creativity Award. IDEATECTS® Inc. of Doylestown, Pennsylvania provided sponsorship for the award and facilitated the design of the beautiful crystal award.

Rosemary Bognar from Destination ImagiNation, Inc. ignited our afternoon with thoughts of putting a Creative Zing into Your Work and Your Life. Participants left with some new creative problem solving tools that they could put right to work. Following a full day of sessions we all looked forward to the evening networking reception. Good food, conversations and connections were topped off with an entertaining performance by 3M Sounds of Harmony. Especially memorable was the group's rendition of My Favorite Things featuring 3M products, samples and all. The audience was so involved with the entertainment they spontaneously jumped up to form a chorus line during one of the numbers.

Saturday the conference focused on creativity in education and moved to the Science Museum of Minnesota. Our conference cosponsor Destination ImagiNation, Inc. demonstrated the ways they have developed creative problem solving skills in our children—kindergarten through college level—in a performance-based environment. 3M's Visiting Wizards showed us that there is a cool approach to teaching kids science and technology that can be done with impact to stir up children's imagination. We were even treated to a look at Minnesota's First TM LEGO TM League, an academic competition that allows kids to demonstrate their creativity and teamwork building and programming robots using LEGO Mindstorms.

To say we were overflowing from our Creative Odyssey in St. Paul is an understatement. I know from interacting with so many of you personally that you found the conference challenging and rewarding.