

## **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!

## **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 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 JDR3ed 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.