

# FingerPoints

OCTOBER 2007 EDITION

E-Newsletter for *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously*

## Like Sands Through the Hour Glass...

...these are the Days of Our Lives.

Okay, I will admit it. I am a long time fan of the soap opera, *Days of Our Lives*. I could blame it on my mother, who watched it when I was young. I could blame it on my roommates who "forced" me to watch it in college. But neither of those would be fair, because neither would explain why, when I got a chance to watch the show this summer, that I enjoyed it all again. I loved seeing Stephano back in his evil best. (Note: I believe I have seen all 27, or so, deaths of Stephano.)

Now, why did I bring this up. Well, it is my way of telling you about the theme for *FingerPoints* this month, which is *These are the Days of Our Lives*, based on our monthly feature of highlighting the fun and unique days, weeks, and months. October seems to be the month that has the most special celebrations. I don't know why, but I noticed that there a lot of events that need to be highlighted.

There is another reason that I want have the theme *These are the Days of Our Lives*. It is that these definitely are the days of our lives.

As most of us are moving into the 3rd

month of the school year, sometimes it is hard to remember the good things of life, and in most cases, the good things of life is life itself. This past weekend, I was lucky enough to be reminded about this again, not once but twice.

First, I was at my son's soccer game, taking a million pictures of him, like a usually do, when I stopped to look at one picture that showed how much he has grown. I took a moment to think about that, and then I looked around and saw my family who was there to support him, and I thought that this was the good part of life. The second time was that evening when my son and I were playing a special round of golf at night. It was special because it was the last round on "our" course before it closed forever. But mainly it was special because we were doing it and having fun together. It was special because it was the days of our lives.

Make sure you get out and enjoy your own days of our lives.

Have a Good Day,  
Scott Endres

## The Finger of the Month - #6 Laugh is Good Strikes Back

I know, we normally don't have six fingers (unless you are Count Rugen), but for this month we need a sixth. The reason is because this month is National Sarcasm Awareness Month. This issue of *FingerPoints* marks the end of the two years of newsletters, and during that time I have not once written about the unspoken sixth finger of when laughter strikes back through sarcasm.

Sarcasm is one of the true mainstays of education. Now, before you say those without sarcasm cast the first stone, I admit it. I still use sarcasm. I use it during my presentations. I have used it in this newsletter on a regular basis, but the key is, those are all in adult situations. (On a side note, I unfortunately still use more than I want with students.)

Yes, sarcasm is part of our adult world, but it shouldn't be part of our educational world. First, sarcasm is laughter that is adult in it's basis. It is very easy for students to misunderstand. Second, sarcasm is divisive humor, where it pits one person against another. Usually, teacher versus student. Third, sarcasm is negative humor and we don't need to bring any more negatives into our schools. Finally, remember that the word sarcasm is based on the Greek word *sarkasmo*, which means to tear flesh. Enough said.

I know it is tough. I still fight it most days, but join me as we celebrate National Sarcasm Awareness Month and be aware of when we use it in our classrooms.



Don't Be Afraid...

## Don't Be Afraid...

When I started this series on Don't Be Afraid to Be Stupid nine months ago, I thought it was obvious what topics would be discussed, and in general it has been. I mainly write about stupid things I have seen that work, or stupid things I have done. For example, I could write about a college coach painting himself orange or maybe about my experiences dressing up in a chicken outfit in front of 900 middle school students right before the ever important state testing. (Don't ask.)

Well, I was wrong. After talking to a lot of different teachers over the years, it has become obvious there is one area that seems very stupid to a lot of people, and I hadn't thought about it. That is why the Days of Our Lives theme for Don't Be Afraid is to celebrate Positive Attitude Month. Often keeping a positive attitude seems very stupid. With all the negative aspects of teaching, the stress that goes along with it and the negative people around us, it can be very easy to fall into the negative attitude trap, and it can seem like that negative defense is something that helps us survive.

Now I can quote all kinds of research that shows how a negative attitude effects our life in areas of happiness and health. I can also quote research about how a positive attitude can be contagious, but none of that really matters. Whether we have a positive or a negative attitude really comes down to choice. Do we choose to be positive or negative? And when you are talking about the effect we want to have on children, is there really a choice? No.

So, don't be afraid to be stupid. Don't be afraid to be positive.

## The TS Moment of the Month

Since most of us are starting the third month of the school year, you probably have several suggestions for the Teaching Sucks Moment of the Month. Maybe it's the 23rd new education book you have been given by someone, and that you are expected to read it in your "free time." Maybe it's the 10 weeks of standardized testing your students have to suffer throughout the year. Sadly I didn't make that 10 weeks number up. Maybe it's simply that last week had a full moon in it. Maybe it is something that happened just when you thought you had seen everything. (And if it is, please let me know.)

Whatever your TS Moment of the Month is, I'm sure of one thing. I'm sure it is a legitimate reason that teaching sucks. I'm sure that it is something that is very irritating and at some level, it drives you a little crazy. The question is, what do you do with this? Well, following the Days of Our Lives theme, I suggest you celebrate *International Moment of Frustration Scream Day* on the 12th. In every profession, and in fact every part of life, no matter how good it can be, there are some things that suck about it. The key is realizing that, and then getting it out of your system.

So, on the 12th get it out. You can scream, though that could scare people around you, or just find a way to get it out. It could be going out on weekend, or maybe just going to a park. For me, to get my scream out, I tend to put on my Ipod, crank it the highest volume, and take a walk. (At this point, it would appropriate to apologize to the passersby while I'm walking, for all the bad singing.)

Whatever you do, make sure to celebrate on the 12th and get your scream out.

**Sign that the End of the World Is Near (and Funny)**

Britney Spears is an anagram for Presbyterians

## These are the Days of Our Lives

October is apparently the National Month of National Months, because it has at least 31 different national month designations. In addition, there are so many official weeks and days in October that I had to expand the section to three pages. I don't know why October is such a popular month to celebrate, but I'm all for it. Remember these are real holidays celebrated by someone, somewhere. So just celebrate!

### Month

Adopt a Shelter Dog Month	Celebrate Sun Dried Tomatoes Month
Celebrate the Bilingual Child Month	Children's Magazine Month
Class Reunion Month	Diversity Awareness Month
Eat Better, Eat Together Month	German-American Heritage Month
Go Hog Wild - Eat Country Ham Month	Halloween Safety Month
Head Start Awareness Month	Health Literacy Month
International Starman Month	International Strategic Planning Month
Long Term Care Planning Month	Lupus Awareness Month
Nat. Animal Safety & Protection Month	National Bake and Decorate Month
National Book Month	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
National Canine Good Health Month	National Caramel Month
National Chili Month	National Chiropractic Month
Nat. Communicate w/ Your Kids Month	National Cookie Month
National Construction Toy Month (Sorry but this month has been recalled. Just teasing.)	
National Crime Prevention Month	National Dental Hygiene Month
Nat. Depression Education Month	National Downs Syndrome Month
National Ergonomics Month	Nat. "Gain the Inside Advantage" Month
National Go on a Field Trip Month	National Liver Awareness Month
National Medical Librarian Month	National Orthodontic Health Month
National Pajama Month	National Physical Therapy Month
National Popcorn Poppin' Month	National Reading Group Month
National Roller Skating Month	National Sarcastic Awareness Month
National Seafood Month	Nat. Spina Bifida Awareness Month
National Window Covering Safety Month	National Work and Family Month
Organize Your Medical Information Month	Pastor (Clergy) Appreciation Month
Photographer Appreciation Month	Polish American Heritage Month
Positive Attitude Month	Right Brainers Rule! Month
Self-Promotion Month	Spinach Lovers Month
Talk About Prescriptions Month	Vegetarian Month
Wishbones for Pets Month	Women's Small Business Month
Work Place Politics Month	Rett Syndrome Awareness Month
Energy Management is a Family Affair - Improve Your Home Month	

**The Rest of October Is Continued on the Next Two Pages.**

## These are the Days of Our Lives Continued

### Weeks

1-5 California Ride Share Week	1-7 Customer Service Week
1-7 Financial Planning Week	1-7 National Work From Home Week
1-7 Spinning and Weaving Week	2-9 No Salt Week
4-10 World Space Week	6-13 National Newspaper Week
6-12 Physicians Assistants Week	7-13 Emergency Nurses Week
7-13 Fire Prevention Week	7-13 Home Based Business Week
7-13 The Magic of Differences Week	7-13 Mental Illness Awareness Week
7-13 Mystery Series Awareness Week	7-13 National Carry a Tune Week
7-13 National Metric Week	7-13 Nuclear Medicine Week
7-13 Squirrel Appreciation Week	8-12 Improve Your Home Office Week
14-20 National Chestnut Week	14-20 National School Lunch Week
14-20 Get the World to Beat a Path to Your Door Week	
14-20 International Credit Union Week	14-20 National Veterinary Technician Week
14-20 YWCA Week Without Violence	14-20 Teen Read Week
14-20 World Rainforest Week	15-21 Freedom from Bullies at Work Week
15-19 National Business Women's Week	15-19 National Health Education Week
16-20 National Infection Prevention Week	16-20 Celebrate Micro Home Business Week
21-27 Kid's Care Week	21-27 National Character Counts Week
21-28 National Food Bank Week	21-27 National Forest Products Week
21-27 National Massage Therapy Week	21-27 National School Bus Safety Week
21-27 Synergy Week International	22-28 Freedom of Speech Week
23-27 Celebrate Job Loss Week	24-31 Prescription Errors Education Week
25-31 International Magic Week	29-11/3 Give Wildlife a Break Week

**The Days of Our October Lives are on the Next Page.**

## Make a Difference Day

I couldn't have a theme of the Days of Our Lives, highlighting different special events of the month, without talking about Make a Difference Day, and let's make this brief.

**CELEBRATE MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY WITH YOUR STUDENTS!**

Over the last twenty years I have learned several constants about students. One, is that there are no constants. Okay that was cheap, but true. However, another constant is that students enjoy helping other people. The problem is most students don't know they enjoy it, because they have never had the opportunity to help other people. Some of the my best memories in teaching have come from school food drives, where students who I would have never thought cared about anything, said that the food drive made them feel, for the first time, like they made a difference

This month, give your students and yourself a chance. It doesn't have to be much to start with, but make sure that the event is fun. After the first event, you will have students chomping at the bit to help others, because they will be addicted to making a difference.

**Need a Good Clean Joke to Share with Your Students?**

Take a look at [www.basicjokes.com](http://www.basicjokes.com)

## These are the Days of Our Lives Continued

### Days

- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1  | Child Health Day                                      | 1  | Fire Pup Day                             |
| 1  | International Day of Older Persons                    | 1  | World Vegetarian Day                     |
| 1  | World Habitat Day                                     | 2  | Phileas Fogg Wager Day                   |
| 2  | World Farm Animals Day                                | 3  | Balloons Around the World Day            |
| 4  | Ten -Four Day   | 5  | World Teachers Day                       |
| 5  | Levi's Denim Day                                      | 5  | National Diversity Day                   |
| 5  | National Storytelling Day                             | 5  | World Smile Day                          |
| 6  | Chowder Day   | 6  | Johnny Appleseed Day                     |
| 6  | Mad Hatter Day  | 6  | National German-American Day             |
| 6  | Jackie Mayer Rehab Day                                | 7  | Intergeneration Day                      |
| 7  | International Frugal Fun Day                          | 7  | World Mental Health Day                  |
| 8  | Alvin C. York Day                                     | 8  | Cosmopolite Day                          |
| 8  | National Kick Butt Day                                | 8  | Native Americans' Day                    |
| 9  | Leif Erickson Day                                     | 9  | World Post Day                           |
| 10 | Emergency Nurses Day                                  | 10 | International Top Spinning Day           |
| 10 | National Cake Decoration Day                          | 10 | Int. Day for Natural Disaster Reduction  |
| 10 | National Bring Your Teddy Bear to Work and School Day | 12 | Int. Moment of Frustration Scream Day    |
| 11 | General Pulaski Memorial Day                          | 13 | Clergy Appreciation Day                  |
| 12 | World Egg Day   | 13 | Ironman Competition Day                  |
| 13 | International Newspaper Carrier Day                   | 13 | International Skeptics Day (I doubt it.) |
| 13 | Navy Birthday   | 14 | Dressings and Sauces Day                 |
| 14 | Be Bald and Be Free Day                               | 15 | White Cane Safety Day                    |
| 15 | National Grouch Day                                   | 16 | World Food Day                           |
| 16 | Department Store Day                                  | 17 | Int. Day for the Eradication of Poverty  |
| 16 | National Boss's Day                                   | 18 | Get Smart About Credit Day               |
| 17 | Mulligan Day  | 18 | Support Your Local Chamber of Commerce   |
| 18 | Get to Know Your Customers Day                        | 19 | Evaluate Your Life Day                   |
| 18 | International Credit Union Day                        | 20 | Miss American Rose Day                   |
| 20 | Bridge Day  | 20 | Sweetest Day                             |
| 20 | Reptile Awareness Day                                 | 21 | Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Day   |
| 20 | World Toy Camera Day                                  | 22 | International Stuttering Awareness Day   |
| 22 | National Color Day                                    | 23 | TV Talk Show Host Day                    |
| 23 | National Mole Day                                     | 24 | United Nations Day                       |
| 24 | Lung Health Day                                       | 26 | Frankenstein Friday                      |
| 24 | World Development Information Day                     | 27 | Navy Day                                 |
| 27 | Cranky Co-worker Day                                  | 28 | Mother-in-Law Day                        |
| 27 | Make a Difference Day                                 | 28 | St. Judes Day                            |
| 28 | National Chocolates Day                               | 30 | Create a Great Funeral Day               |
| 29 | Internet Day  | 30 | National Candy Corn Day                  |
| 30 | Haunted Refrigerator Night                            | 31 | National Caramel Apple Day               |
| 31 | Books for Treats Day                                  | 31 | National Magic Day                       |
| 31 | National Knock-Knock Jokes Day                        |    |  |
| 31 | National UNICEF Day                                   |    |  |