

An Interview with Maurice Fisher, Publisher – *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* and Gifted Education Press

1. When did you begin publishing *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*?

I started in the spring of 1987 – almost twenty-two years ago.

2. What have been your publishing goals for *GEPQ*?

Originally, I wanted to offer individuals interested in educating gifted students the opportunity to write articles that address current issues and problems in the field. My intention was to present all sides of problems related to identifying and educating the gifted with no biases (on my part) for or against any “school of thought” or theory. I was mainly looking for well-written and interesting articles that were jargon-free, and I welcomed teachers, professors, graduate students, administrators and parents to write these articles.

Today, I have these same publishing goals after twenty-two years.

3. What is the current readership and authorship of *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*?

We now have about 14,000 online subscribers and are adding new ones weekly. All subscribers received hard copies until about 2002 but now they are primarily subscribing online. Teachers, program specialists and coordinators, parents, graduate students and professors from across the USA and overseas receive this publication four times a year.

Our authors have been from all areas of the gifted field – professors such as Donna Ford, Joseph Renzulli, Virgil Ward, Sally Reis and Joan Smutny – in addition to teachers and parents located in the educational trenches that are good writers, and have creative ideas for teaching gifted children.

4. Maurice, I understand that the latest issue of *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* is now online. Could you tell our readers how to access it?

Here is the link for the current issue – Winter 2009 (Volume 23, No. 1):

<http://www.giftedpress.com/GEPQWINTER2009.pdf>

All of your readers who would like to receive a complimentary subscription should contact me at gifted@giftedpress.com. I will send them instructions and codes for accessing all previous issues (back to the spring of 1987!) and will email them when we publish future issues. Graduate students, educators and parents who are studying the history of gifted education or who are conducting research will have the capability to locate many useful articles by using the online Search features, online Table of Contents, and Topical Lists on our Web Site.

I should emphasize that this is a complimentary subscription with “no strings attached.” Of course, they will also have the option of cancelling their subscription at any time. Readers should see our Web Site at www.giftedpress.com to find more information about *GEPQ*.

They can see the Table of Contents for all issues at the following link:

<http://www.giftedpress.com/gepqnw.htm>

5. Regarding the Winter 2009 issue, could you provide a list of authors and locales from which they come?

As in most previous issues, our authors are from many different areas of the United States. They also have a variety of different interests in educating the gifted. The topics covered in the Winter 2009 issue are:

- Sanford Aranoff of Rider University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey discusses the importance of teaching gifted students in a clear and logical manner. He gives examples from science education of how thinking clearly and the use of appropriate examples will help teachers to increase their gifted students’ understanding of difficult topics in science and other subjects.
- Shlomit Rachmel of The Israel Ministry of Education and Roza Leikin of the University of Haifa discuss different types of mathematics programs for gifted students in Israel. They present many examples that can be used with gifted students in the United States.
- Christine L. Weber, Terrence W. Cavanaugh and Nile V. Stanley from the University of North Florida, Jacksonville address the use of electronic books and materials in educating the gifted. Their discussion of the history and current applications of electronic books is a comprehensive analysis of this important topic.
- Michael Walters (Center for the Study of the Humanities in the Schools, Bronx, New York) has written an interesting essay on the life and accomplishments of Itzhak Perlman – gifted classical music violinist, conductor and teacher. He discusses why Perlman is a *Hero of Giftedness*.

6. What are some of the most recent books that you have published?

Here is a brief summary of these stimulating and useful books:

- ***Energizing Your Gifted Students' Creative Thinking & Imagination: Using Design Principles, Team Activities, and Invention Strategies —A Complete Lesson Guide for Upper Elementary and Middle School Levels*** (ISBN 0-910609-57-8) by Harry T. Roman, Technology/Engineering Educator, East Orange, New Jersey. The book is primarily concerned with teaching students how to think creatively and solve problems. It is written by a design engineer with extensive experience in teaching at the public school and college levels.

- ***Solar Power, Fuel Cells, Wind Power and Other Important Environmental Studies for Upper Elementary and Middle School Gifted Students and Their Teachers: A Technology, Problem-Solving and Invention Guide*** (ISBN 0-910609-54-3) by Harry T. Roman, Technology and Engineering Educator, East Orange, New Jersey. This book addresses many current environmental issues such as the use of solar energy, wind power and fuel cells, and recycling waste products. The chapters on these issues and many others contain fascinating, thought-provoking problems for students to work on individually and in teams.

- ***Golden Quills: Creative Thinking and Writing Lessons for Middle-School Gifted Students*** (ISBN 0-910609-56-X) by Robert E. Myers, Ed.D., Creative Learning Consultant, Healdsburg, California. This is an exciting teacher manual and student workbook containing *Twenty-Seven Lessons* that will stimulate creative learning abilities in the language arts. Myers is an educator and designer of learning materials for stimulating gifted students' creative learning and thinking abilities. Professor E. Paul Torrance was his doctoral advisor and mentor.

- ***More SNIBBLES: Serendipitous Seasons*** (ISBN 0-910609-55-1) by Judy Micheletti, Teacher of Gifted Students, Berwick, Pennsylvania. Contains 154 stimulating and fascinating exercises based on using ordinary objects found in the school and home. Micheletti is a highly experienced teacher of the gifted who is a middle school gifted program facilitator and regional coordinator of Odyssey of the Mind.

More details about these books are on the Gifted Education Press Web Site: www.giftededpress.com. They can be ordered directly from GEP or via Amazon.com.

- I am enthusiastically looking forward to the publication of our ***Heroes of Giftedness*** book in the spring or summer of 2009. This book contains essays on many living geniuses in the sciences, medicine, literature, music and the arts who can serve as mentors and models for teachers of the gifted and their students. These inspirational essays have been written by several of my authors and colleagues.

7. What seem to be the most prevalent issues in the field of gifted education at this time?

This is a difficult question to answer because the national, state and local “playing fields” are constantly shifting. From my perspective as a publisher, author and researcher, I see the following issues:

First, the economy is clearly having a devastating effect on formal gifted programming in the public schools. It appears that it will take the US economy many years to recover from these economic problems, so I’m not very optimistic about the future funding situation in gifted education. The history of our country is fraught with many serious economic downturns but the basic optimism of the American people and our inherent “can do” attitude always overcame these problems. We are a resilient people, motivated to solve seemingly unsolvable problems. All educators and parents can continue to offer high quality programs, even under the present circumstances of reduced funding. The perennial American values of innovation, hard work and responsibility for giving each child the best possible chance in life should take hold in each gifted classroom and with each gifted child. Teachers, parents, professors, mentors, community leaders and all others concerned with the gifted need to pitch-in and work harder for these children.

Second, we should examine whether we have failed to educate gifted students to be ethical human beings. So many of the individuals involved in the current economic disaster have attended the best private schools, and Ivy League and other outstanding universities. This is astounding to me. What went wrong with their education? Something bad happened here – probably errors of omission in their ethical training. The gifted field needs to address what educators must do to help make students good, caring citizens and ethical-moral individuals. Of course, the world of finance and business world should also engage in this type of self-analysis but nothing like this seems to be forthcoming. The current emphasis on political correctness in our society has apparently done little or nothing to avert this ethical-moral disaster.

Third, I am not happy with how gifted programs are dealing with humanities education. I started Gifted Education Press in 1981 with the goal of encouraging humanities education for gifted students. Initially, my authors wrote books on teaching such topics as American literature and poetry, Shakespeare, history, logic and philosophy to the gifted. Their books were widely used until the mid-1990s when the high-stakes statewide testing movement seized control of American education. I have argued in previous interviews that this “tricky-dog” method for accessing and “educating” all students has produced an ongoing educational disaster. Teachers cannot educate their students properly and students cannot learn anything of lasting value in this centralized, state-run system. This is not education as practiced in Western culture for over 3,000 years, and it certainly does not favor high quality education for gifted students. It is no surprise to me that our economic system has been run into the ground by the products (the students) of this system – who are constantly goaded to provide correct multiple-choice answers (the current

be-all and end-all of American education) with little or no consideration for the ethical consequences of the subject(s) being studied.

Fourth, the issue of identifying and educating minority children needs continued emphasis. There are thousands of children in ghetto schools and poor rural areas that need to be properly assessed and to receive a challenging education for developing their highest abilities and talents. In a previous interview with you, I said that Donna Ford and her colleagues at Vanderbilt University are doing some of the best work in this area. I continue to believe this and support their writing efforts through *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*.

There are other important issues in the gifted field I could discuss here, but I'll save them for a later interview.

8. If someone wanted to submit a paper for your journal, what steps would they follow?

I am always looking for well-written, stimulating and provocative articles. Authors should first read the list of suggested topics at the following link:

<http://www.giftededpress.com/SEEKINGAUTHORS.htm>

Then, they should email me at gifted@giftededpress.com with their proposal for an article. This does not have to be a formal proposal. It can be a simple statement of the topic(s) to be covered and an outline of the paper. In addition, please include a resume along with the proposal.

If these ideas are appropriate for publication in *GEPQ*, I will provide authors with access to the current and previous issues so they can study the writing styles and topics covered.

Articles are usually published within six months to a year after being accepted. I do not pay authors for publishing their articles since *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* is a professional publication designed for the enlightenment of the gifted field.

9. What question have I neglected to ask?

On Tuesday, January 20, 2009, we will have a new President of the United States of America. This is a remarkable event in American history. President Barack Obama has expressed the need for improving art and music education in America's schools, which is an encouraging approach for upgrading the quality of children's education. Let us hope that he will also support and help to implement effective programs for developing our nation's greatest natural resource, the gifted children of America.

Thank you for this interview and I wish you and your readers much success in educating their own gifted children.