

FROM THE EDITOR

Learning from the best

We love our prizes. Every week, it seems, from this time of year through the end of March, critics' groups will line up to hand out awards to the best movies and movie performances of the year. And there are also the Emmys, Tonys, and Grammys, plus the vast number of awards in college and professional sports.

Each year, in April, one award is handed out that doesn't draw the attention it should: the National Teacher of the Year. For more than 50 years, it has been given to the individual who has won the top award at the local, state, and, finally, national level, the highest honor a teacher can receive.

That's one reason, as part of our package on "The Future of Teaching," that we feel fortunate to have spent some time with Jason Kamras and Kimberly Oliver, our cover subjects this month. Thanks to Andy Drewlinger, who works for the Council of State School Officers (the program's primary sponsor), we were able to corral them briefly for the photographs and an interview on a wide range of topics. And thanks to the work of Carrie Carroll, *ASBJ's* art director, we were able to do so in a terrific setting—the Hotel Monaco in Washington, D.C.

Logistics aside, the comments made by Jason and Kim are both interesting and thought provoking, as are those of Chauncey Veatch and Betsy Rogers, the 2002 and 2003 National Teachers of the Year. They provide a tremendous insight into the major topics and challenges facing the profession today.

And what are those topics? Senior Editor Lawrence Hardy, working from a report from the Teaching Commission and a variety of reports and resources, identified five areas of concern and potential reform: teacher pay, attrition, staffing and assignment, training, and licensing and certification. He provides you with an overview and short primers on each in our package, which starts on Page 16. We also have a former teacher (H. Wells Wulsin) and teacher educator (Michael Imber) weighing in with additional viewpoints.

We hope you enjoy it, and we hope you will let us know what you think.

Another feature in this month's *ASBJ* marks the return of Del Stover to our pages. Del started work with the magazine in the mid 1980s, left, and later returned to work for NSBA's National Affiliate newspaper—*School Board News*. This month, in his first article as an *ASBJ* senior editor, he looks at the political and policy issues surrounding the debate over abstinence-only sex ed curricula. It's a compelling read.

Finally, I'd like to call attention to the comments made by members of the *ASBJ* Reader Panel at the start of our Up Front section. Coming just weeks before the midterm elections, the comments from board members and superintendents provide tremendous insight into how readers feel about Congress' approach to public education.

Glenn Cook
Editor-in-Chief

