LOOKIN’ FOR A HOME
An Editorial

Kurt W. Clausen
Editor-in-Chief

During my childhood, whenever there was a lull in the conversation in the car, my father would frequently break into a lilting hum. More often than not, the tune he chose was an old Brook Benton chestnut, the Boll Weevil Song. And, as my father was never one to be troubled with lengthy verses, he tended to settle into the refrain and remain there for quite some time. I can remember many a drive in the country hearing nothing but the low, baritone call of...

Just a-lookin’ for a home, lookin’ for a home.

Ain’t got no home, ain’t got no home.

Knowing nothing more of the song, or the devastation wrought by this beetle, I would often naively sit there feeling sorry for the boll weevil, and his homeless state. In more recent years, these words still resonate with me. However, I tend to relate it more to a human condition than to that of the insect world. Like the song, the word “statelessness” conjures up a whole raft of sad images in my mind: Desolate peoples wandering aimlessly because they have no place else to go; Unrecognized peoples whose universal human rights are ignored because they have no advocate to defend them; Marginalized peoples whose voices cannot be heard because they are not seen as legitimate members of a society. Unfortunately, in most cases, these images are based on reality.

Having lived the privileged life of a national in a first world country, I could only imagine the hardships endured by those “citizens without a country”. This feeling of disconnectedness must be felt most palpably for those whose state has disappeared altogether. The merest brush that I have ever had with this condition has only happened since I became associated with this journal. To explain...
In 2001, when I started co-editing the *Ontario Action Researcher* (the progenitor of CJAR), I took on the job with full confidence in the knowledge that it represented a formalized society: It had been created as a communication organ for the Ontario Educational Research Council. Shortly after this, however, the unthinkable happened and, after more than forty years of existence, the council seemed to collapse overnight. Like water flowing from a broken urn, the community that I was just getting to know simply trickled away, to be absorbed into other organizations and associations. The fate of my journal (for now the circle had shrunk to such a small size) was now very tenuous as it no longer represented any formal entity. Nipissing University did provide technical support, but it could not offer that which makes a journal truly solid... a family of supporters, readers, and “engagers”. This had to be rebuilt over the next few years.

The position of “statelessness” may be equated to being silenced and disregarded. However, on another level, it does allow for a new exchange of ideas to a new audience. While tales abound of Russian aristocrats who were relegated to driving Parisian taxis after the Bolshevik Revolution, many expatriate Russian philosophers managed to affect French intellectual discussion before the Second World War. In many ways, it seems natural that these new ideas came about when old structures fall apart, and when those who speak have little to lose. Such was certainly the case for the old OAR. With nobody to say “whoa”, the boundaries of Action Research could be expanded and played with. Indeed, from this, the *Canadian Journal of Action Research* was truly born.

However, it does come to a point where, after roving unattached for such a lengthy time (ten years now), any entity must finally long for a permanent home. Such was the drive that led the editorial board of CJAR to consider attaching itself to a new community. This is why it approached the *Canadian Association for Teacher Education* (CATE) to help create just such a community. To this end, I am proud to announce, therefore, that on May 24th of this year, CATE has allowed CJAR to co-host a pre-conference as part of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education’s Annual Conference at Brock University. Alongside discussions on the future of Action Research, there will be a concerted effort to see if a Canadian Association of Action Research could be created to bring together a heretofore dispersed community. Readers of CJAR are all welcome to attend, and more information will be sent to you shortly.

In this issue, we hear from fellow travellers who also seek answers in the realm of Action Research: Daniel Robinson, an assistant professor at St. Francis Xavier University, focuses on trying to engage female students in physical education classes. Rodney Beaulieu, from Fielding Graduate University in California then takes on the tricky task of examining the breadth of definitions open to the term Action Research and the practical applications that ensue. A past contributor, Julian Kitchen from Brock University, returns with an associate, Marg Raynor, to discuss their work with educators who incorporate Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy into mainstream classrooms. Finally, a team of scholars from Taiwan, led by Chiu-Kuei Chang Chien, lead a reflective self-inquiry project to identify possible factors that cause low performance of non-first language English classes at the university level.