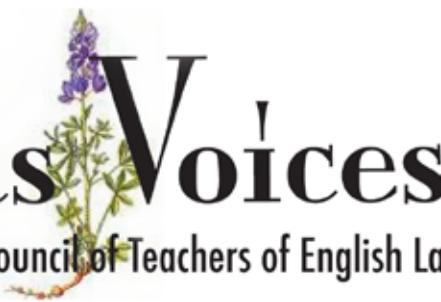


Texas Voices

A Newsletter of The Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts



The greatness of Gatsby

By Molly Adams, Vice President of Membership and Affiliates

I rarely pick up *Vogue* magazine. Rarely. I'm not much for fashion, or celeb-spotting, or advertisements, or hair and makeup tips. While the writing and editing in *Vogue* is top-notch, and I hold the magazines that hang on in a digital world demonstrating fine writing in the highest regard, I still rarely pick up a copy of *Vogue*. But you have to admit – *Gatsby* is everywhere right now. I have seen at least five different trailers or teasers rotating through on television. Magazines galore boast the revival of 1920s fashion, dance, design, architecture, and the outlandish approach to living in general. But this month, standing in line at Barnes and Noble, *Vogue* caught my eye.

Maybe it was Carey Mulligan's gorgeous lime-green velvet Oscar de la Renta gown, or the jewels that dripped from her ears, neck and fingers, like a river of sparkling stars. Maybe it was that signature curled blonde bob, just like I imagine Bernice had, complete with that enigmatic smirk, giving this half-Mae West, half-Clara Bow effect, with just a dash of Josephine Baker simmering beneath the surface. The article, written by Tom Shone and aptly titled "Great Expectations," chronicles the path of Mulligan to prepare for her role as Daisy Buchanan in Baz Luhrmann's technicolor treatment of *The Great Gatsby*, which was released in theaters May 10.

Shone's interview with Mulligan is rife with literary references: quips by F. Scott Fitzgerald and friends documented over the years, the most beautiful and powerful quotations from Fitzgerald's original *Gatsby* text, and a collection of tidbits, references, and additional quotations collected from Mulligan's "workbook," a multi-genre notebook that contains all of her personal research for a role (great classroom idea!). This particular role, Daisy, shoulders part of the heavy weight of a novel most experts say cannot be filmed. Consequently, Mulligan collected photocopied letters between Fitzgerald and his young lovers from his dalliances during Zelda's stay in institutions, a copy of Zelda's autobiography and memoirs, photographs, studies of previous films and previous Daisies, and her notes on just how to craft that voice that was mellifluous, intoxicating, and "full of money." In fact, in Shone's article, Mulligan refers to her crafting of Daisy's character, which includes a great deal of what inspired her from Zelda and Fitzgerald's real-life tumultuous relationship, as her "Daisy

cocktail," which is appropriately phrased for a role cut from the Prohibition-era cloth that Daisy is (Shone, 2013, p.248).

Gatsby, originally published in 1925, has often been referred to as the "great American novel" and still remains one of the most widely reprinted classic novels of all time. Just this past week, movie tie-in copies appeared on shelves, putting Leonardo DiCaprio and Carey Mulligan front and center, backed by clothes, music, and design that has never before been captured in such splendor and color in order to entice the popular audience to read and then go see the film. This version of the film will be released in 3D, perhaps to attempt to harness the larger-than-life characters, with larger-than-life dreams, which crumble into larger-than-life tragedy. And the buzz about the film is palpable, vibrant, and infectious.

When I purchased that copy of *Vogue* in my local grocery store, the young man ringing me up mumbled, "Oh I love *The Great Gatsby* – that book has such soul, you know?" And as he looked up at me, I'm sure my shock was completely transparent – for I have just read this novel with my English III classes, and like usual, the reception was 50/50. 50% love the depth of despair it reaches and the darkness of human nature it reveals, and 50% think Fitzgerald's sentences are too long, there really isn't a lot of action, and Nick really is just a big bore. I stared at the check-out clerk and stammered, "Wow, thank you. I am a teacher, and no one says they love it anymore." We chatted for a few minutes about the upcoming film and how excited we were about the experience we would have seeing it on the big screen for the first time (the other films are before my time or made for TV: 1974, 1949, and 2009). And it occurred to me in that moment: will the film prompt students, present and past, to read it again? Or read for the first time? Simply because Luhrmann and Mulligan and DiCaprio brought Gatsby to life again, in all its dream-like, gin-soaked, gold-digging glory?

Ironically, the trailer I have seen the most contains this exchange between Nick and Gatsby, as fireworks explode in the background and the party boils on at a feverish pace to the right:

Nick: "You can't repeat the past."

Gatsby: "Can't repeat the past?" (pause, smirk) "Why of course you can!"

continued on page 16

From the blogosphere...

Three Teachers Talk...and you don't want to miss what they have to say! Subscribe to the blog today.
<http://threeteacherstalk.wordpress.com>

...to the website

Get involved in a local affiliate today!
www.tctela.org/affiliates

Corner

President's message

By Kay Shurtleff, President

It's that time of year when my closest friends and family try to keep all sharp objects away from me. Here's an example of why. Just the other night at an informal dinner party in a restaurant, a friend said, "I don't know why teachers need an appreciation week. I don't get one in my job." The room began to spin as my blood pressure rose and I could clearly hear the sound of my heart thumping in my head. The room fell silent while my husband furtively moved my dinner knife away from my plate and into the concealed safety of his pocket. A physical reaction in my stomach, a disinclination to cause a public scene, and fear of losing a friend kept me from speaking. For fifteen seconds.

When I did speak, I engaged my finest weapon: sarcasm. "You're right," I said curtly. "Teaching is quite glamorous. You're appreciated by everyone in our entire society, you leave your work at school, and you never have to spend your own money on anything."

My point was made, but I, like any other self-respecting English teacher, did not stop there. I pointed out the luxuries of a seven-minute lunch break, the joy of having your elimination system dictated by the bell schedule, and the bliss of actively monitoring a standardized test. My friend fell silent and began to look shorter.

I confess all of the above with dual purpose. First, I'm certain all TCTELA members can identify with the scenario. While you probably handle yourself more professionally and graciously than I did, I know you've encountered a similar situation. Teaching is a misunderstood calling and profession. We do what we do because of a deep understanding and desire to do the right thing for kids and for our society.

Second, as we move into summer, I want to say thank you and congratulations on a job extraordinarily well done. The fact that your eyes are seeing this newsletter reveals that you are a dedicated educator who sees value in belonging to a professional organization and connecting with other professionals. You do it *not* because anyone is requiring it, but because you are committed to doing the right thing. You're a Pied Piper of learning with followers you cannot even always see.

Somewhere amidst your summer curriculum meetings, professional development sessions, projects that have waited 10 months to be completed, teaching summer school, and professional reading, I hope you'll take some time to stop, reconnect with who *you* are, and celebrate your teaching practice. You do remarkable, significant things every day. Society is ever in your debt. kay.shurtleff@region10.org

Tech tools blog coming soon

By Susan Poteet, Technology Committee Chair

Can we tech? Let's talk tech a while. The Technology Committee struggled with a name for the new blog and decided to opt for the simple and straightforward name, Tech Tools. The objective is to provide tools that teachers can (and will) use in their classrooms to enhance student engagement and student learning. Instead of just throwing ideas at teachers, the blog will have user-friendly, detailed information for each topic and will be ready for implementation.

So, who leads the committee? Technically, a teacher and an education specialist. Lindsey Brewer-Munoz teaches sixth grade language arts this year and will be teaching seventh grade next year in Spring Branch ISD in Houston. Susan Poteet currently works at Region 16 ESC in Amarillo after a scenic route of teaching ELA/R in sixth grade through English IV – different times and multiple combinations. She now works with teachers and is *loving* it!

The first few topics will include bringing the SMART phone into the classroom, blogging with the kids, Edmodo, and Twitter in the classroom. We would love to hear your comments and suggestions for topics you would like us to explore as well as how the blog topics are working in the classroom.

Get some WD40 and open up that toolbox! We plan to offer lots of tools to fill it up!
snpoteet107@gmail.com

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972-348-1756 [kay.shrtleff@gmail.com](mailto:kay.shurtleff@gmail.com)

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Electronic Communications Manager

Lisa Thibodeaux, Plano ISD
469-951-2192 lisa.thibodeaux@plisd.edu

SLATE/NCTE Representative

Margaret Hale, University of Houston
713-614-8218 grithale@aol.com

Editor, Texas Voices

Jennifer Engle, Schleicher County ISD
214-906-2059 jennifer.ngle@scisd.net

Editors, English in Texas

Gwynne Ash, Texas State University
512-245-8068 gwynne@txstate.edu

Jane Saunders, Texas State University
512-245-1604 janesaunders@txstate.edu

Lori Assaf, Texas State University
512-245-9163 lassaf@txstate.edu

Carol Delaney, Texas State University
512-245-2044 cdelaney@txstate.edu

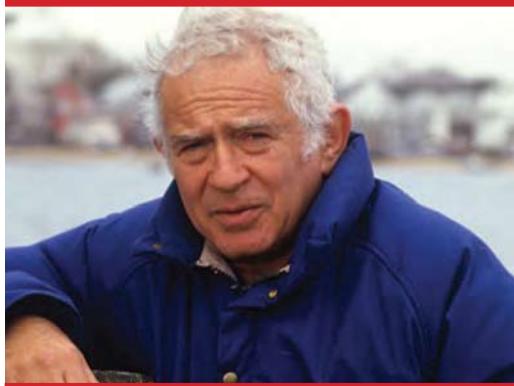
Valerie Taylor, Eanes ISD
512-288-3247 vfstaylor@sbcglobal.net

Executive Director

Amy Blakely
800-694-8680 fax: 888-595-7276
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*We tell ourselves
stories in order to
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THE NORMAN MAILER WRITING AWARD FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

The Norman Mailer Center and Writers Colony and the National Council of Teachers of English are pleased to invite submissions for the 2013 Norman Mailer Writing Award for Middle School and High School Teachers. Full- and part-time teachers are eligible to enter the competition.

From five finalists, one winner will be selected to receive a \$5,000 cash prize to be presented at an award ceremony in Fall 2013.

The competition is limited to works of **non-fiction**.

Entries will be accepted March 1–July 23, 2013, Noon CST.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Submissions will be read by national panels of teachers and will be judged by how well they achieve the following qualities: handling of image, plot, character, or other elements; originality; insight, voice, and style; and overall aesthetic, emotional, or intellectual effect. Stories that receive high ratings from the teacher panels will be submitted to a distinguished panel of authors selected by the Norman Mailer Center, who will choose the winning entry. Previous judges included William Kennedy, Sigrid Nunez, Colum McCann and other accomplished authors.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Entries will be accepted online only and may include one piece of writing, maximum 20 single-spaced pages.

Apply online at <http://www.ncte.org/awards/nmwa>.

One winner and four finalists will be notified in early September. Results will be posted on the NCTE website: www.ncte.org.

*Authors retain copyright of their work.

*Funding for travel to the **awards ceremony** for the award winner is limited to coach airfare within the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. Outside of the US, a \$500 USD payment toward travel will be allowed. Hotel/lodging at the awards event will be covered.

Norman Mailer Writing Awards are brought to you by:

The National Council of Teachers of English:
NCTE is devoted to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all scholastic levels.

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The Norman Mailer Center and Writers Colony:
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Legislative update

By Margaret Hale, SLATE/NCTE Liaison

There are many issues regarding public education being discussed and argued over in the current legislative session - too many to enumerate and explain here. However there are several big items that warrant some explanation.

One of the biggest issues that has been debated through numerous bills concerns End-of-Course exams at the high school level. House Bill 5, authored by Jimmie Don Aycock, Chair of the House Education Committee, requires students to pass 5 EOCs including English II reading, English II writing, Algebra I, Biology, and US History. Further, it states that EOC performance for students may be included in their final grade, and EOCs for Algebra II and English III can be taken at a student's option with no defined performance requirements. This bill also deletes the cumulative score requirement. House Bill 5 passed in the full House on March 26, passed in the Senate on May 6, and a committee is currently deciding on the differences between the House and Senate versions.

Also related to testing, House Bill 2836 authored by Bennett Ratliff, R-Coppell, would eliminate the grade 7 writing STAAR test and the grade 8 social studies STAAR test beginning in the 2013-14 school year. In addition, this bill would require that STAAR tests be designed so that 85% of students in grades 3-8 could finish in 2 hours and 85 % of students in grades 6-8 could finish in 3 hours. HB2836 passed out of the House on May 1 but is still in the Senate Education Committee at the time of this publication.

Both the Senate and the House have been engaged in debate regarding restoration of the education cuts that were made two years ago. The House has voted to restore \$3 billion out of the \$5.4 billion that were cut. The Senate has voted to restore \$1.5 billion from general revenue and another \$800 million from the Rainy Day Fund. These proposals are being considered in conference committee on the state budget, but without some Rainy Day Funding, the efforts to restore funding to education will fall short of the entire \$5.4 billion.

Having been appointed to this position on TCTELA's board in January, the last few months have been a learning curve for me. I have always been aware of things happening in the state legislature that affect public education, and I have spoken out about some of those things, but I wasn't ever fully aware of the process that happens when bills are put forth in the various committees and then voted on in the House or Senate.

I encourage all of us to become aware of this process and speak up when we feel our voices need to be heard as educators in Texas. To learn more about these bills and many others that are up for consideration, you can visit the Texas Legislature online at www.capitol.state.tx.us. If you feel strongly about any of the education issues currently being considered in the legislature, I urge you to contact your legislators and register your opinion. For contact information, visit <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>. grithale@aol.com

Recognition requested

By Katrina Gonzales, Past President

You know that colleague down the hallway that all pre-service teachers seek out for help? Or the one who started a book club just for middle school literacy teachers? Or how about the educator at another campus who is asked to do workshops at your regional Education Service Center which fill up within a day because of his amazing reputation teaching high school English to high school juniors?

Each of these teachers and so many more in our state deserve to be nominated for one of TCTELA's Teacher of the Year categories. Nominate your peers, your colleagues, the movers and shakers in our profession for their dedication and work in English Language Arts education.

During the summer, please consider taking some time to nominate someone for one of the following awards:

- The Dr. Edmund J. Farrell Award: Distinguished Lifetime Service to English Language Arts in Texas
- The TCTELA Elementary Teacher of the Year
- The TCTELA Middle School Teacher of the Year
- The TCTELA High School Teacher of the Year
- The TCTELA University Teacher of the Year
- Mercedes Bonner Leadership Award

Find nomination information on the TCTELA Website at <http://www.tctela.org/nominations>.
katrina.gonzales@scisd.net

Call for membership participation

By Laura Slay, Multicultural Committee Chair

Members of TCTELA's Multicultural Awareness Committee wish to submit a panel proposal for the 2014 conference in Corpus Christi with a focus on Latino/Hispanic Young Adult Literature. Do your high school or middle school students read books by authors such as Sandra Cisneros, Matt de la Pena, Isabelle Allende, Guadalupe Garcia McCall, Gary Soto, Rudolfo Anaya, Coert Voorhees, Diana Rodriguez Wallach, Juan Felipe Herrera, Oscar Hijuelo, Manuel Luis Martinez, and Mike Lupica, or other Hispanic/Latino authors? Would you like to share your experiences with fellow TCTELA members? If you are possibly interested, please email TCTELA member Laura.Slay@Kellerisd.net

Asking powerful questions as a critical friend

By P. Tim Martindell, President-Elect

The Critical Friends Group (CFG) that I coach sat in rapt attention around the conference table in a middle school classroom-turned-office on an early fall Friday afternoon as one of their colleagues presented her dilemma and sought reflective input to solve her problem. Using the consultancy protocol (McDonald, 2007), the group asked a series of questions designed to clarify their understanding and push Maya's thinking about her dilemma. The protocol, or structured conversation, allowed the group to focus with laser-like precision on the issue at hand and assist Maya as she reflected on her problematic situation.

In my role as coordinator of secondary English Language Arts for a large suburban school district, I supervise an existing group of five "helping teachers"—content area coaches—whose jobs involve frequent school visits and on-site professional development for teachers. The group had been meeting for several years before I started working for the school district. Collectively they wondered what to expect from me as their new "boss." Under prior coordinators, the group had worked together collegially as independent contractors sharing office space and occasional anecdotes with each owning their individual projects. This independent contractor status fostered little collaboration and even less critical feedback of each other's practice. They soon learned that my vision for our *mutual* professional learning would be to create a highly effective team of collaborative, critical friends.

On this particular Friday afternoon, the group experienced the consultancy protocol through the dual lens of learner and participant. New to the notion of the Critical Friendship coaching approach, but experienced as peer facilitators, the women reluctantly acquiesced when I suggested that we add the CFG coaching training to our weekly meeting agendas. Though the women had worked together for several years, they had not previously been asked to share intimate aspects of their coaching practice or personal lives with each other. The original helping teacher, Eileen, volunteered to present her dilemma first.

As the coach, trainer, facilitator, and new boss, I wore several "hats" in this meeting as I guided the group through the structured series of clarifying and probing questions associated with CFG, a coaching model that uses structures or protocols to quickly facilitate deep level reflective conversations. In these facilitated conversations, educators discuss professional dilemmas, bring examples of student or teacher work for critical feedback, and gain insight into better serving the learning needs of individual or collective groups of students. In short, the embedded protocols when well-facilitated move discussion from "surface" topics like dress codes to deeper reflection on personal teaching practices.

The protocols used in a Critical Friends Group rely heavily on three different types of questions: Focusing, Clarifying, and Probing. Focusing questions allow the listener to hone in on what is important—to focus with laser precision on exactly what issues are being pondered by the person presenting a dilemma. Examples of focusing questions might look like: How can I adapt this lesson for my ELL students? How would this conversation flow if I...? What is missing from my unit of study?

Clarifying questions allow the listener to gain additional information that facilitate understanding of what is being presented. I like to think

of these questions as the "Just the facts, Ma'am" type questions that a detective might ask in a film noir. Examples of focusing questions might be: How many students do you see in a typical day? What is the schedule of classes for your campus? Have you always taught in the block schedule?

Probing questions are similar to rhetorical questions in that they need not be answered immediately; they function as a means of pushing a person's thinking about an issue. When the listeners ask the presenter probing questions, they are hoping to expand the presenter's thinking about the issue rather than expecting an answer. Probing questions, which must be carefully phrased so as not to suggest an answer, might look like this: What kinds of decisions cause you the most trouble? What do you value most in your work? What makes your demonstration lessons worth sharing? What makes you compare your work to that of your peers? What are the standards by which you judge your work and from where do they come?

Working through the protocol, her peers and I asked a series of questions meant to help Eileen reflect, discuss possible solutions and find new perspectives to her felt dilemma. Eileen reflected positively on the experience, cited the insight she gained from the process, and encouraged the others to follow her lead. The group concluded the consultancy protocol with a collective reflection and the members readied themselves for Maya's dilemma to be presented next.

peter.martindell@fortbendisd.com

References

McDonald, J. P., Mohr, N., Dichter, A. & McDonald, E. C. (2007). *The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice*. 2nd Ed. Teachers College Press: New York, NY.

Concho Valley Teachers of English

4th Annual Summer Conference

Date: July 22nd, 2013

Location: ESC Region 15 in San Angelo

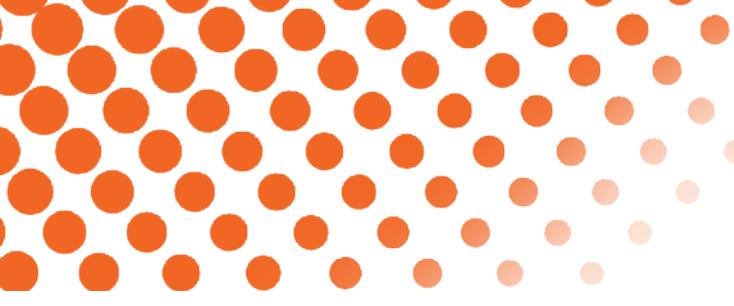
Contact: cvtenglish@yahoo.com

Register: <https://mis.netvx.net/sess1.asp?sess>

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CVTE invites everyone to attend their annual conference.

In addition to CVTE's tradition of professional book talks and round table conversations with colleagues, this year's conference will focus on the theme Shifting Responsibility: Effective Instruction for Independent Learners. Participants will learn new ways to incorporate the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model with ideas for lessons and formative assessments. In addition, Katie Greene from Milton High School in Georgia, one of the 2012 recipients of NCTE's National High School Teachers of Excellence Award, will be the featured presenter with her workshop on student-centered classrooms.



TCTELA 2014

Lead the Way

2014 PRESENTATION PROPOSAL FORM

The 2014 conference committee reviews each presentation proposal form against the rubric found on tctela.org. Please take the time to review the rubric and complete the form. Incomplete information will either disqualify your proposal or delay notification. TCTELA communicates to the primary presenter, as a representative of the proposal team. The primary presenter is required to communicate with the additional speakers and respond to TCTELA requests.

PRESENTER(S) INFORMATION

Print clearly, check all that apply, and provide information for all presenters if this is a joint presentation. Attach another sheet if necessary. Your program confirmation will be sent via email. Please make sure your email address is correct.
Presenter experience is for information only and is not scored on the rubric.

- First-time presenter
 Previous presenter at TCTELA Conference (most recent years __, __, __)
 Previous presenter at a national conference [list organization(s)]
-
-

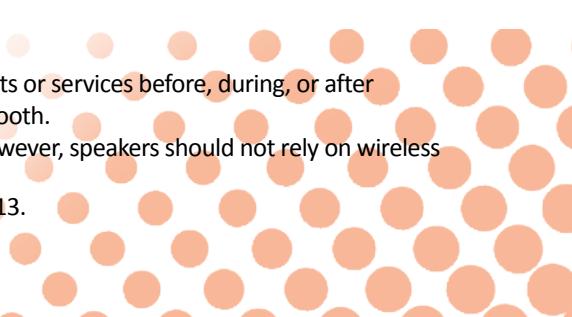
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ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS

Additional Speaker	Title/Position	School District	Campus
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Additional Speaker	Title/Position	School District	Campus

PRESENTER NOTES

Please initial each statement to indicate your agreement.

- It is the obligation of each presenter to register for the conference and incur hotel and travel expenses.
 A screen will be provided. All other AV equipment is the responsibility of the presenter.
 Presenter(s) must be a current member of TCTELA. Membership in NCTE does not qualify.
 Proposals must be postmarked on or before June 21, 2013.
 Incomplete proposals will not be considered.
 Presenters and their representatives are prohibited from advertising and/or selling products or services before, during, or after concurrent session presentations. Presenters who wish to do so must purchase an exhibitor booth.
 Wireless Internet will be available for the 2014 conference at the Omni Corpus Christi. However, speakers should not rely on wireless connection to conduct their presentation.
 Presenters are welcome to email handouts to TCTELA for Web posting by December 6, 2013.
- 

SESSION TITLE As you wish it to appear in the program. (Do not use abbreviations.)

SESSION ABSTRACT Please limit to 50 words or less. This abstract will be listed in the program book.

SUPPORTING THEORY/PRACTICE/RESEARCH RESOURCES AND/OR TRADE BOOKS/TOPICS OF EMPHASIS

With each resource, please identify how it relates to the proposed topic. Research and trade book information is offered to our bookstore vendors at the conference.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

- Pre-Kindergarten Elementary (K-5) Middle School (6-8) High School College
 General (proposals of interest at all instructional levels)
 Other _____

TYPE OF PRESENTATION

- Concurrent Session (1-hour program)
 Student Mosaic (student-led tabletop presentation supported by a teacher)
 PechaKucha (see www.pecha-kucha.org/what)

ORGANIZATION OF SESSION

- Interactive Lecture Student Models Panel Bring Your Own Laptop
 PechaKucha (visit www.pecha-kucha.org/what for information on how to structure this session)

Explain how the session is organized and what, if any, materials are provided to attendees: _____

AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT

- I would like to order a laptop/LCD projector system. I agree to pay for the equipment rental before the conference. (\$300)
 I will need an overhead projector and screen.

**Please note, TCTELA will provide a screen. Speakers are required to bring their own laptop, laptop speakers, and LCD projector.

TOPIC(S) OF EMPHASIS Check all that apply.

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multicultural Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> ELL/Bilingual Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergent Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-AP®/AP®/Honors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New to the Profession | <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented* | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature/Poetry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Comprehension | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

*For Gifted and Talented and Pre-AP®/AP®/Honors, please send copies of the documentation of your G/T hours and yearly updates along with a resume showing your degrees, certifications, work history, etc. Additional information about TAGT can be found at www.txgifted.org/about/professional-development. This information is sent to the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented for G/T credit approval.

Note: Presenters will be notified of the status of the proposal by November 1, 2013. All program participants must pay the conference registration fee (and membership fee if nonmember) in order to present at the TCTELA Annual Conference. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Complete this form and return by June 21, 2013: TCTELA, 701 Brazos Street Suite 500, Austin, TX 78701, or complete online at www.tctela.org. TCTELA members submitting online are able to track their presentation proposal form.

Oh no! I need some help with how to teach writing!

By Jane M. Saunders, Co-Editor, *English in Texas*

Every summer, I attempt to recharge a bit by reading and reflecting on my teaching practice. A few summers back I was given Aimee Buckner's book *Notebook Know-How: Strategies for the Writer's Notebook*, and immediately thought about ways that I could incorporate her ideas into my work with pre-service teachers. Most of my students vary in terms of the grades (K-12) they plan to teach and in their preferred content, but one thing they almost universally hold in common: they are terrified about how to teach writing and grapple with ways to bring students to writing that are authentic, engaging, and offer avenues for growth.

This is where Buckner's book comes in handy as she shows throughout how to use the notebook for myriad tasks: generating writing ideas, practicing voice to develop pieces, exploring genre, strengthening grammar, and using the notebook to evaluate students' work. Buckner acknowledges, "It's not a science, there

is no one right way. Keeping a notebook is a process." There are vignettes of her work with students, advice on how to launch the notebook, strategies for working on particular writing skills, and a wonderful list of those who have influenced her work as a writing teacher.

Since my initial reading of her book, I have purchased and gifted at least ten copies to teachers worrying over whether they were teaching writing the "right" way. My pre-service teachers tell me Buckner's thin volume is one of the few books they refuse to sell back at the end of the semester – the ultimate compliment from financially strapped college students. Between this book and the writing notebooks they've cultivated over the course of the semester, my students walk away with not only ideas for how to enhance the practice of teaching writing, but also with written work that can serve as models for their future K-12 students. Check it out! janesaunders@txstate.edu

Bluebonnet season year-round in Austin

By Marge Chatterjee, Early Childhood Committee Co-Chair

"I liked *Hamster Magic* best!" one of the third graders yelled.

"Can I check out *Postcards from Camp*?" asked another, "it's this year's winner!"

Winner of what? *Postcards from Camp* by Simms Taback was the winner of the 2012-2013 Texas Bluebonnet Award. The Texas Bluebonnet Award is a Texas Library Association program to encourage 3-6 graders to read for pleasure.

This year, the entire third grade at Cedar Creek Elementary got to vote for their favorite 2012-2013 Bluebonnet nomination. They were so excited! And it is all because of our librarian, Shannon Foley.

Mrs. Foley has established a Bluebonnet program that instills a great deal of excitement in our intermediate students. Beginning with the third graders, she reads the Bluebonnet nominated books aloud during their library time. Some of the classroom teachers read some of the nominated chapter books during class. Any student that reads, or listens to, five or more of the nominated books is eligible to vote for their favorite. The book that receives the most votes is that year's winner.

The fourth and fifth grade students are challenged to read all the nominated chapter

books and as many of the picture books they would like. They can count any nominated book that has been read to them as well, so Mrs. Foley recruits and collaborates with teachers to use Bluebonnet books as class read-alouds.

In the spring of 2009, I needed a new book for a class read-aloud and asked Mrs. Foley for a recommendation. Knowing how much I enjoyed the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys mysteries as a child, she suggested *The Case of the Case of Mistaken Identity*, by Mac Barnett. It was a brand new, tongue-in-cheek mystery. The third graders and I had a blast with the story. It turned out that the book was later nominated for the 2011-2012 Bluebonnet Award. My former students were so excited when they learned that our read-aloud would count for their fifth grade Bluebonnet challenge!

Currently, I am reading *Waiting for the Magic*, by Patricia McLaughlin, a 2013-2014 nominee. Next year, when my students are in fourth grade, *Waiting for the Magic* will count toward their voting eligibility and toward Mrs. Foley's ultimate incentive – a field trip to [BookPeople](#), an award-winning independent book store in Austin.

When she began the program, twelve fourth and fifth graders accepted her

challenge and earned the BookPeople field trip. This year, Mrs. Foley and a fourth grade teacher took thirty students on the field trip!

Mrs. Foley's program is an easy, delightful way for Cedar Creek's intermediate students and their teachers to enjoy wonderful literature in a variety of genres. We're looking forward to reading, and listening to, next year's nominations. mchatterjee@eanesisd.net

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on Twitter: @tctela**



Responding to independent reading methods in the ELA classroom – Part 1

By Brian Bass, Recording Secretary

As the nation continues to mandate higher standards and increased rigor in all subject matters, literacy learning in the ELA classroom is and will also be the driving force behind the academic success of all students. In 1980, the state of Texas introduced the TABS test. Now over thirty years later and three different state assessments between, STAAR has elevated the academic complexity and depth of knowledge to even greater heights. With the increased complexity and the depth of knowledge required by the STAAR across all content areas, students have to engage deeply in multiple types of text in different contexts. The ELA teacher has become the facilitator across the disciplines to insure that students engage deeply with diverse texts and transfer these practices and behaviors from the ELA classroom into other fields of study.

While the state assessment should not be the motivation for encouraging students to become deeper thinkers and readers, assessment does influence classroom instruction. ELA teachers, beyond the demands of the test, want their students to be lifelong critical thinkers, observers, and learners, and they want these

skills practiced in the ELA classroom to be applied to authentic experiences beyond academia.

One activity that develops and encourages these essential behaviors of a lifelong learner and an informed citizen is independent reading. Independent reading encourages choice, textual transactions, deep reading, vocabulary development, thoughtful writing, critical thinking, and the reading of diverse texts. The seemingly unstructured process of reading independently has the double benefit of encouraging these literate practices across the curriculum as well as in their daily lives. However, questions often arise concerning independent reading in and outside the ELA classroom:

- How do teachers monitor their students' reading?
- How do teachers know if students are reading deeply (or even reading)?
- How do teachers hold students accountable for their reading?
- How do teachers assess their students' thinking about their reading?

continued on page 17

How to win a math teacher over to literacy and a literacy teacher over to math

By Kim Pinkerton, Vice President-Elect for Membership and Affiliates

The formula is simple really. Add one math teacher plus one literacy teacher and multiply the whole group by *Edgar Allan Poe's Pie: Math Puzzlers in Classic Poems* by J. Patrick Lewis. What does this equal? It equals a group of teachers who have become enamored with the idea of literacy across the curriculum.

As a teacher educator who is tasked with convincing middle and secondary math teachers that they can infuse literacy into their curriculum, I am always in search of the best books out there for math teachers. Sure, I talk with them about the importance of teaching content vocabulary. Yes, I have them read and think like mathematicians using statistics-based news articles and journal articles from the area of mathematics. However, call me stubborn or just plain crazy, I cannot give up on the idea that these math teachers can still find room for books, both fiction and nonfiction, in their classrooms. So, I spend countless

hours perusing the bookstores, libraries and Internet for the book that will soften my preservice math teachers to the idea of using literature in their classrooms. Well, in December 2012, I finally stumbled upon a book that really made believers out of those math teachers. That book was *Edgar Allan Poe's Pie*.

J. Patrick Lewis has taken classic poems by Poe, Lear, Whitman, Dickinson, and many other greats and has reconstructed them into mathematical mirrors of the original pieces. Each poem screams at the reader, "Solve me!" And, indeed, my middle and secondary preservice teachers who want to eventually teach math did just that. Through reciprocal teaching groups, I watched my students discuss both the beauty of the poem, the implied meaning, and the steps to coming to a mathematical solution for each poem. They explored the vocabulary and made the necessary inferences that were essential for finding the mathematical

answers. They questioned each other, both about poetic understandings and about the steps they had each taken to solve the math problems. The discussions were so rich, and each of those preservice teachers talked about how to use this book in their future classrooms. I was thrilled to hear them discovering what literature does have to offer their future math students.

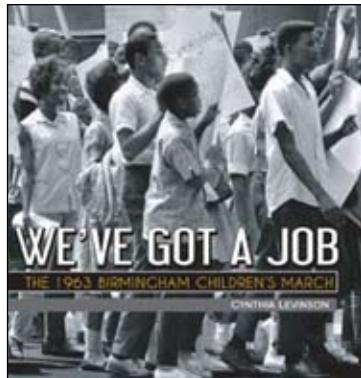
I encourage those of you who teach literacy, literature, and English classes to take a look at this unusual book of poetry. Talk deeply with your students about these remakes on the old classics and then step out there, even if this is way outside of your comfort zone, and work those math problems with your students. Show your students that the math and literacy curriculum do not have to be divided by such a great chasm. And then, walk this book right over to your math department and forge those cross-curricular relationships that we so desperately need in our classrooms today.
pinkerton@uhd.edu

Leaders of state literacy organizations team up at international conference

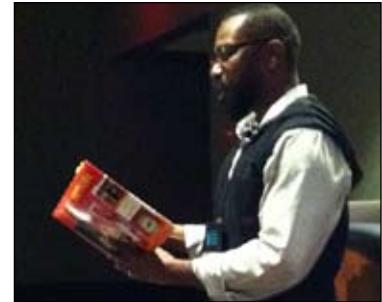
By Kay Shurtliff, President

In April, Texas played host to the International Reading Association, commonly referred to as IRA. Current presidents of all three state organizations—TCTELA, Texas Association of Literacy Leaders (TALE), and Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading (TAIR)—kicked off a three-hour session highlighting Texas authors with a short overview of each professional organization. Following that, the real fun began.

Cynthia Levinson, author of *We've Got a Job* described her process in writing the book—an engaging expository text about the 1963 Birmingham Children's March. As she talked about her extensive research, she showed pictures of children involved and told their stories. Law enforcement used water power sprays and dogs to try and deter the effort, but, as Levinson said, "Nothing stopped the children." With good reason, this book has won numerous awards. Perhaps the best review of the book, though, comes from this Texas 4th grade student's book trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XN3jga7eMo>

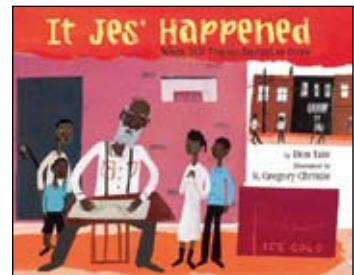


Author/illustrator Don Tate followed Cynthia. Widely known as an illustrator, Tate talked about the first book he has authored, *It Jes' Happened*. "For years I was afraid of my words," he said. "I finally learned to respect my imperfect voice." Published in 2012, this book tells the true story of Bill Taylor, a freed slave who began to draw at the age of 83. The following link provides further insight about the book: <http://dontate.com/books/it-jes-happened-when-bill-taylor-started-to-draw/>



Dr. Sharon O'Neal, recent winner of the TCTELA College Teacher of the Year Award and former editor of *English in Texas*, took center stage next. She showed various ways the work of both authors has been used in Texas classrooms.

Participants went away with a new understanding of the civil rights movement, insights into each author's creative process, and myriad ideas for using the work of these Texas authors to enrich the lives and education of their students. Kay.Shurtliff@Region10.org



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Publication: *English in Texas*, Volume 43.2 (Fall/Winter 2013)

Theme: Nurturing Global Citizens in Local Classrooms

Deadline: September 1, 2013

Call for Submissions: As students become more connected through technology, how can we encourage them to think of themselves as citizens of this broader world, able and willing to shoulder the responsibilities they have to one another? Becoming a global citizen requires students to explore critically and compassionately the interconnectedness and interdependency of people, cultures, and languages, especially the ways that decision making in one society impacts events in others (Herrera, 2012). At the same time, being a global citizen is about creating a habit of mind that seeks to understand and preserve relationships and connections across borders, while building a sense of self-identity and integrity (McIntosh, 2005).

For this themed issue, think about ways that you have guided students in using technology to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment. What instructional methods and activities have been most effective in teaching your students to become global citizens? How have your students used technology to recognize their own and others' perspectives? How do you instruct students to communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences and translate these into appropriate actions to improve the conditions and situations either globally and locally? Consider how you and your students explore a range of domestic and international texts and media to identify local, regional or global literacy learning. Do you use a variety of sources, media, and languages to examine relevant evidence to address global issues? If so, what are they and how have they mediated your students' ability to become global citizens? Have your students' inquiries resulted in service learning projects in which students have the chance to address a local or regional issue? Reflect on how effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking contribute to students' capacity to advocate for and contribute to improving local, regional or global issues.

Call for Student Submissions: Technology and the Internet have helped us connect with others both in our local communities and in faraway lands. We invite students to tell us about their experiences using these tools to communicate and participate with others across the world, as global citizens. Has the Internet broadened your understanding of the ideas and perspectives of others beyond your neighborhood and school? Have you taken action as a result of this learning? Is technology shrinking or enlarging the world?

Student Submission Deadline: October 15, 2013

Submission guidelines available on: <http://www.tctela.org/journal/>

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**The Central Texas Writing Project and
Central Texas Council of Teachers of English proudly present**

Teri Lesesne and Donalyn Miller

Igniting the Love of Reading



The Book Whisperer

Come spend the day with teachers and librarians! Our special guest speakers are noted authors, teachers, and book lovers –

**Teri Lesesne with Karin Perry
and
Donalyn Miller**



The Book Woman

Tuesday, June 11, 2013 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
(Registration begins at 7:30 am)

Teri Lesesne is the notable author of *Reading Ladders* and *Naked Reading*. Kylene Beers calls Teri, “the Book Woman” for her vast knowledge of young adult literature. **Donalyn Miller** is a teacher in Keller, Texas, and the author of the book, *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*.

Schedule of Events * **Texas State University - Round Rock Campus**

1555 University Blvd., Round Rock, Texas, 78665

Exit 256 (IKEA) off of IH-35. Then, turn right. Enter the Avery Building on campus.
Workshops will be held in Rooms **252 and 256**.

7:30 - 8:30	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 11:30	Secondary Session with Teri Lesesne with Karin Perry; Elementary Session with Donalyn Miller
9:45 - 10:15	Break and Book Signing (The TSU Bookstore will be selling books by the authors).
11:45 - 1:00	Lunch (on own)
1:00 - 4:00	Elementary Session with Teri Lesesne with Karin Perry; Secondary Session with Donalyn Miller

* Each participant will receive six hours of CPE and/or G/T credit for attendance at the workshop.

To download a registration form, please visit the following website:

<http://centraltexaswritingproject.ning.com>

Questions? Please email Diane Osborne at diosborn@txstate.edu or call 512.245.3680.



**THE CENTRAL TEXAS WRITING PROJECT AND
CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH PROUDLY PRESENT**

Teri Lesesne with Karin Perry and Donalyn Miller

Igniting the Love of Reading

Tuesday, June 11, 2013, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Teri Lesesne is the notable author of *Reading Ladders* and *Naked Reading*. Kylene Beers calls Teri, “the Book Woman” for her vast knowledge of young adult literature. **Donalyn Miller** is a teacher in Keller, Texas, and the author of the book, *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*.

Register early for the best workshop rates!

Texas State University – Round Rock

1555 University Blvd., Round Rock, Texas, 78665

Exit 256 (IKEA) off of IH-35. Then, turn right. Enter the Avery Building on campus.

Workshop Registration Cost: \$70.00 (See tiered pricing below for the best rates!)

Included in registration:

- Continental breakfast
- Admission to two exciting workshop sessions with Teri Lesene with Karin Perry and Donalyn Miller (designated morning and afternoon sessions for both elementary and secondary participants)
- Session handouts
- Book signing with the authors!

Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the Avery Building at Texas State University. The first session will begin at 8:30 a.m., and the workshop will conclude at 4:00 p.m.

Tiered Pricing for the Workshop - Early Registration/Level I – Register by May 15th

- \$70.00 nonmembers
- \$60.00 members
- \$50.00 per person if 3 or more are able to attend from one school or district (includes CTCTE membership for nonmembers)
- \$30.00 Central Texas Writing Project Teach Consultants (TC)
- \$20.00 for students with college identification

Tiered Pricing for the Workshop – Level II after May 15th

- \$80.00 nonmembers
- \$70.00 members
- \$60.00 per person if 3 or more are able to attend from one school or district
- \$35.00 Central Texas Writing Project Teach Consultants (TC)
- \$25.00 for students with college identification

Day of Event Pricing - Add \$5.00 at the door

**Please mail completed registration form and payment to
(cash, check, or PO). Mail to:**

CTWP, c/o Diane Osborne
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

**Contact Information and
questions:**

Diane Osborne
diosborn@txstate.edu
512.245.3680

Workshop Location

Texas State University – Round Rock

1555 University Blvd., Round Rock, Texas, 78665

Exit 256 (IKEA) off of IH-35. Then, turn right. Enter the Avery Building on campus.

**THE CENTRAL TEXAS WRITING PROJECT AND CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH PROUDLY PRESENT
Igniting the Love of Reading**

Teri Lesesne with Karin Perry and Donalyn Miller

Tuesday, June 11, 2013, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Names(s) (Please list all attendees included with this registration form.)

Address (Please list one address if registering multiple attendees.)

Street:

City/State/Zip:

Home/Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

School/District: _____

Campus: _____

Level (Please check all that apply).

Elementary school _____ Middle school _____ High school _____ University/College _____

Other _____ (specify)

Payment Enclosed (Please list the total amount.)

Cash _____ Check _____ School District PO _____

The TCTELA survey: An update

By Molly Adams, Vice President of Membership and Affiliates

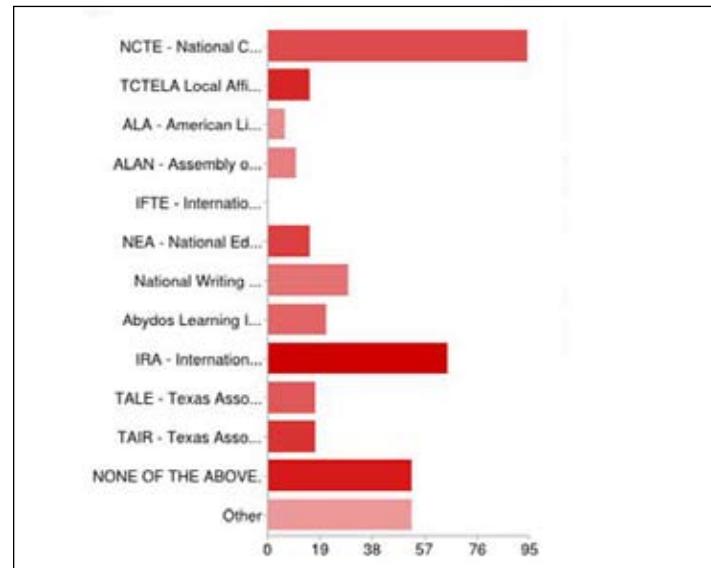
In October 2012, TCTELA board members began developing a survey for the membership. After attending an NCTE affiliate outreach and communication meeting with other affiliates across the region in St. Louis in July 2012, board members Molly Adams and Tim Martindell and other Texas affiliate leaders, began to develop a plan for improving communication across the TCTELA affiliate membership as well as across the state. Texas is obviously the largest state in its NCTE region, but leadership at the meeting began to wonder about two things more specifically:

1. Why do TCTELA and/or the local affiliates not have more members? What is keeping people from joining?
2. What does the membership really want anyway? What do they need?

According to a survey of various websites** with varying collections of information, there are over nine thousand public schools alone in Texas—not including charter, private, home, or other school situations. There are roughly 4.5 million students being served in those public schools alone. Using that data, if only one ELA, reading, literacy, or similar field teacher was involved with TCTELA or a local affiliate (or both), it would surpass current TCTELA numbers by thousands. Although TCTELA has so many teachers and professionals involved in its organizations and sister affiliates, TCTELA wanted to look more closely at the membership climate with a needs assessment of the organization and its members, as well as those who impact or are impacted by the organization.

The survey that was developed by Molly and Tim (then Vice President-Elect and Vice President for Affiliates and Membership respectively), was shared with and collectively worked on by the entire board using Google forms, and was rolled out just before, during, and after the annual TCTELA conference. The survey was sent to current membership using contact information from the database, affiliate leadership and their respective members, districts represented by board members, conference attendees, and various “stakeholders” (administrators, policymakers, etc.) whose input might be valuable. Each respondent was asked to forward this survey to as many people as possible who might have input, TCTELA or affiliate member, or not. As of May 2013, here is a brief summary of that data and some corresponding visuals:

- 188 total people have responded to the online survey
- 17 of that 188 (9%) are actually not members of TCTELA and still completed the survey
- 87% of those who responded currently receive email updates and announcements from TCTELA
- 19% of respondents teach/work at the elementary level
- 57% of respondents teach/work at the secondary level



- 11% of respondents teach/work at the dual credit or university level
- 19% of respondents no longer teach in the classroom but still are affiliated with education, literacy, etc. in some way
- 51% of the respondents are also members of NCTE
- 8% of respondents were only members of local affiliates, not TCTELA
- Respondents were also members of at least 10 other various organizations (ALA, TAIR, NEA, NWP, Abydos, etc.)
- 61% of respondents want TCTELA to provide professional development
- 60% of respondents hope TCTELA continues to provide big conferences annually
- 74% of respondents would like to see more mini-conferences or PDH options to be closer to home or run locally

The communication portion of the survey perhaps yielded some of the most important information for keeping the organization connected internally and externally: 89% of the respondents prefer email for updates and information. In this advanced age of social networking, people still want to keep it simple! However, 33% would like to see the website updated regularly to stay current, 23% like using Facebook for updates, and 27% prefer a combination of communication methods. Though only 16% mentioned interest in Twitter for communication, this is also a very quick and easy way to see what is going on even if teachers don't use Twitter themselves. Twitter is a live public forum; this is a great way to stay on top of things going on in the organization without any login or registration required.

Some overall conclusions drawn from the survey are as follows:

continued on page 18

Finding freedom with the 2013 Newbery Medal prizewinning book

By Kim Pinkerton, Vice President-Elect for Membership and Affiliates

The most distinguished book in American literature for children this year is Katherine Applegate's *The One and Only Ivan*. In this perfect concoction of truth and invention, a gorilla named Ivan and an author named Katherine show readers the true beauty and power of freedom. Katherine's freedom comes in the form of a writer who dared to share a story through beautiful, poetic vignettes, as opposed to inhibiting prose. These masterfully written pieces are perfectly woven to tell the story of a lonely gorilla named Ivan whose many years in captivity have taken away his freedom to dream for more. Readers join Ivan, after 27 years of isolated confinement, as he begins to find the hope and courage to imagine his possibilities.

Elementary-level language arts teachers and their students will marvel at the brilliance of Applegate's writing and the wonder of a story that she so elegantly creates. This book will make the perfect read-aloud for teachers of young children and the perfect book choice for literature circles with more experienced readers. While the book is quite unassuming with

its seemingly simple storyline, word choice, and structure, teachers will have endless opportunity to engage students in deep thinking about writing style, the close relationship between fiction and nonfiction story, character development and growth, the concepts of freedom and humanity, and so much more.

Readers will ponder why Applegate chose this writing style. It is hard not to think about its beautiful simplicity and how she, herself, chose to break free from the prose prison to which so many writers feel bound. How exciting it would be for us to ask our students to think about her stylistic choices as a writer and then to write to Applegate about this topic. Young writers could even try their hand at this form of narrative poetry.

Because Applegate developed her fictional story from the true story of Ivan, the Urban Gorilla, we can help our students to use their writer's notebooks to capture snippets of truth, which can ultimately be transformed into imagined, creative narratives. Most importantly, this wonderful mentor text could be the very

motivation that our students need to find their own freedom as writers.

Readers will also be compelled to think about how easy it was for Ivan to consider his limited environment to be his domain and how long it took him to see it as his cage and, ultimately, his prison. Are there areas of our lives that we name more positively when in reality something very ugly is at the core? As teachers, we can ask our students to explore this idea. We want them to find out how they may be redefining themselves in ways that hold them back. Ivan's story can take children to this level of self-introspection and propel them to freedom as learners and explorers, even as humans.

There is no doubt that this book has a place in every elementary language arts classroom. Children will love the book because of this gentle gorilla and his friends, a disgruntled dog, an enlightened elephant, and one unexpected guest. If you do not already know Applegate's Ivan, then there is no better time to become acquainted. pinkerton@uhd.edu

Elementary, My Dear Watson!

a blog dedicated to elementary teachers' concerns

Greetings TCTELA Elementary Members!



You're already members of many amazing teams at your grade level, school, and district. Let us invite you to join your TCTELA team on a new blog, **"Elementary, My Dear Watson,"** for conversations unique to the elementary educator's perspective.

Find your blog at www.tctela.org. Login with your username and password, navigate to Community, then to Community Forums to find "**Elementary, My Dear Watson.**"

We're looking forward to hearing your ideas!

Early Childhood Committee Co-Chairs,

Marge Chatterjee (mchatterjee@eanesisd.net)

Joan Vaughan (joan.vaughan@region10.org)

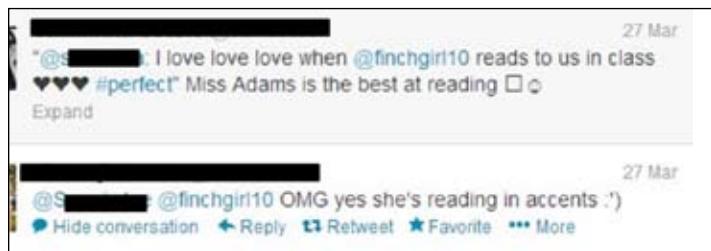
The greatness of Gatsby

continued from page 1

And guess what? It springs from the page to the screen, straight out of chapter 6, almost as if Fitzgerald had written the screenplay himself! While this film is a repeat of the past, and stands on the shoulders of greats like William Powell and Alan Ladd, Robert Redford (sigh!) and Mia Farrow, and Francis Ford Coppola, it is a repeat of something truly wonderful.

The rich and elegant language of Fitzgerald's original text is laden with a social commentary that never ages: dreams are good, but dreams can die; people can attempt to repeat the past, but even people with the best intentions will fail at this very thing. While we as people stretch out our arms to a green light of hope at the end of someone else's dock, we must remember the "foul dust" that floats in our own dreams, just like Gatsby's. Human nature, when fueled by temptation, lust, and impulsivity, will be revealed for all of its dark and terrible grandeur. Though we as a people mean no harm, we make mistakes, make life messy, and foul it up further by entangling ourselves with others on the same path to destruction. These are universal truths, though sadly true, and students can still learn from Gatsby, Daisy, Nick and Fitzgerald.

While we as teachers often shy away from teaching with this text, we forget the value of just reading a chapter aloud to our students and hearing their reactions to a world of time long gone, when it was normal to be friends with gangsters who had molars for cufflinks, and took baths in tubs of illegal homemade gin. The text can still be exciting! I recently read aloud from Chapter 4, my favorite chapter, in my best *Godfather/Sopranos/Brooklyn accent* for Meyer Wolfsheim for my English III class. As I read aloud, this occurred:



While I'm still not sure how I feel about the tweeting-in-class-when-supposed-to-be-reading issue, the value of this exercise is clear: students still need to be read to in order to find a love and understanding of literature. Students sometimes need help with the old imagination when they read – they need costumes, accents, music, and visuals. When we look at old Prohibition-era "prescription" bottles of "medicine," they understand how and why Gatsby owned a string of pharmacies and got rich quick. And they sometimes want to know more. In fact, this particular Twitter exchange alone has opened up a whole new aspect to our communication in class I had not anticipated: they follow me on Twitter because they think I'm interesting and funny, and I exchange with them after class about questions, reflections, and homework reminders. A whole new kind of literacy emerges when we allow ourselves to be part of the moment and our own

cultural milieu, even when it is scary or might even break a few "phone-in-class" rules.

This resulting student inquiry, however, is a crucial cog in the literacy process, and this literacy is not just in print: it is in media (film and music), artwork, and the digital. This literacy extends citizenship and civic literacy in the form of being a global citizen and understanding the economy enough to recognize how the flash and fire of the 1920s could be followed by the unsettling dust of the 1930s, that same dust that floated in Gatsby's dreams.

Gatsby believed in the elusive green light, knowing in his heart that he might never reach it, but keeping the journey and the possibility of a future alive in his imagination, which drove his dreams. We are not so unlike Gatsby in education. As we bear against the current in our tiny boats on such a wide sea, we strain against teaching to a test, and the exasperation and challenges of STAAR, trying to teach writing that matters alongside writing that scores well, while simultaneously hoping somehow, somewhere, a love of reading will be reawakened or born at all. Perhaps it is not so bad to let Luhrmann bear us back, "ceaselessly into the past," as we fall in love with *Gatsby* all over again (Fitzgerald, 2004, p.180).

As for me and my copy of *Vogue*, our class looked at it as an option for research in our literary analysis, and we headed out to see the film in a class trip after school on May 14. We believe you can repeat the past, and you can make it better. But one must have dreams, no matter how burdened with dust, to do so. [fridaywithfrogs@gmail.com](mailto:fridayswithfrogs@gmail.com) @finchgirl10

References

- Fitzgerald, F. S. (1925/2004) *The Great Gatsby*. NY: Scribner.
Shone, T. (2013, May). Great expectations: the inimitable Carey Mulligan. *Vogue*, 08449. 246-55, 314.

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Your Career
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Responding to reading methods

continued from page 9

- How do teachers know if independent reading is having a positive effect on student performance?

Independent Reader Reflection Process

The following process informs teachers about their students' thinking about their independent reading, and it provides opportunities for teacher-student conferences to guide students in their thinking. It also encourages students to use writing as a tool to mediate their thinking about their reading while developing students' deep reading skills. Finally, this process nurtures students' abilities to produce organized responses to what they have read in academically appropriate ways.

Teachers have used a variety of methods to hold students accountable for their independent reading. End of book assessments created either by a second party vendor or the teacher are popular methods. In addition reading logs or book reports are often used as a way to monitor student reading. However, these methods often lack the transparency needed for teachers to gauge student thinking, clarify misconceptions, and encourage deeper engagement with the text.

In this process, students are required to produce a reader reflection at the end of each week. The students reflect on what they have read and follow a structured academic response template. This process requires a period of modeling and scaffolding, where the students are provided a process chart, a response template, and an exemplar. The following reader reflection method was implemented this year in three sixth grade ELA teachers' classrooms in Lake Travis ISD.

Beginning of the Year

Students' initial responses focus on indirect characterization.

Sample template:

I learned that (character) is (character trait). I can tell this because in the text (the character) (action). This (action) reveals that (character) is (character trait) because (rationale). Another reason (the character) is (character trait) is because in the text (the character) (action). This (action) reveals that (character) is (character trait) because (rationale). (Conclusion).

Process Chart: Name character and trait. State action that reveals trait. Explain how specific action reveals this trait. Name another character trait. State action that reveals trait. Explain how specific action reveals this trait. State conclusion.

Initially, these responses are written in their writers' notebooks, where the teacher may move around the room and conference with students about their responses. Once students show

proficiency with indirect characterization, the sample template, the process chart, and the exemplar are modified to focus on theme. Ultimately, students will handwrite their reflections neatly on a piece of notebook paper, and some students will opt to type theirs.

Mid Year

Later in the year, students find and reflect on significant quotations in their reading to analyze author's purpose regarding characterization and figurative language. Students choose a quotation that they feel is important to the text and pull the quotation from it. They must punctuate this quotation in MLA style. Their response follows a prescribed structure which is made into a chart for the students. The students are also provided a sample exemplar.

Process Chart:

- State Claim/Controlling idea
- Clarify Claim and Define the Language Device (character trait)
- Provide Context and Explain Figurative Language (character trait)
- Explain Author's Rationale
- Include a Conclusion

Assessment

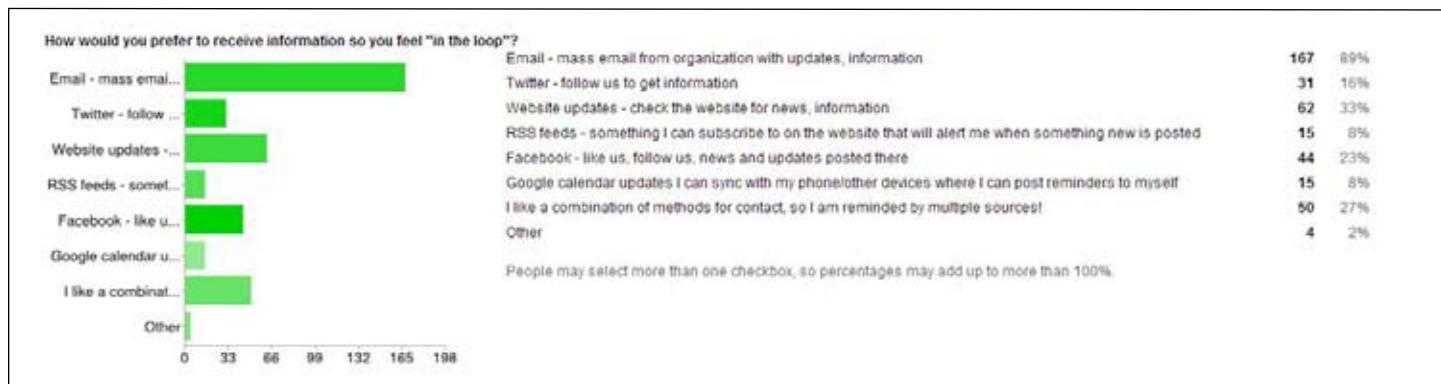
Students are assessed in two ways. First, students are required to choose one of their best reflections for the grading period, revise it, handwrite or type it, and turn it in for a summative grade. Students also complete a timed in-class reflection based on a teacher-selected text. They are assessed based on their depth of analysis and their organization.

Conclusion

Independent reading is a vital part of the ELA classroom. By allowing students freedom to choose their own books, they feel empowered to take an active role in their development as readers and lifelong learners. Opening avenues to engage with students during this process has tremendous value as educators guide students' cognitive abilities to levels unthinkable when Texas introduced TABS. The next part of this article will include information about the results of this process as well as implications of using this method across content areas and across grade levels.
bassb@ltisdschools.org

The TCTELA survey: An update

continued from page 14



- Teachers are really busy and information needs to be condensed but effective with action items highlighted.
- Teachers could showcase their classrooms, what works, and network more effectively if connections were available online or via the website to people's classroom sites, teacher web pages, or personal blogs about working in literacy or education.
- Teachers want more opportunities available close to home to save on cost and having to miss work, when subs often are no longer covered.
- TCTELA could work with local affiliates more closely to help develop some of these programs, or TCTELA could host them itself, in some of these "needs" areas.
- Certain areas of the state do not feel as "in the loop" due to not having access to the organization, the conference, professional development opportunities, connections to local affiliates, or updated contact information in the TCTELA database.

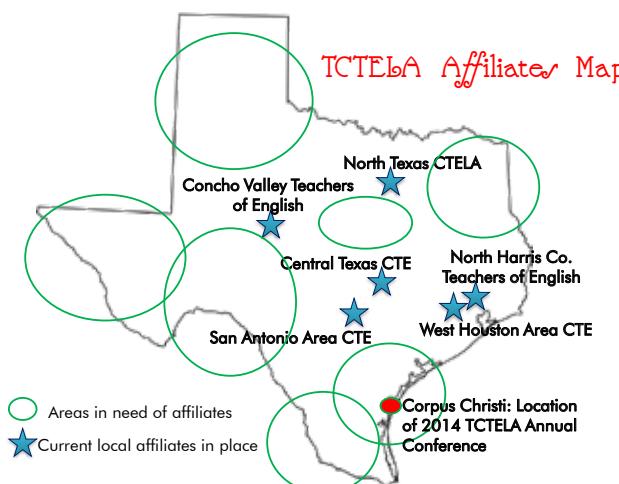
who desire to have local affiliates developed in an area of need. Some members in certain regions of Texas indicated on the map struggle with the distance and expense of travel to the annual conference, and they are in greatest need of an affiliate nearby to help with professional development and networking, similar services that TCTELA offers to its members so that they can be more connected.

However, TCTELA needs your help. You live in these areas and have your finger on the pulse of the needs in your area. TCTELA needs to hear from you; TCTELA wants to help you get more involved or connected to a local affiliate. If you live in a "targeted" area in need of affiliate representation and are willing to take some time to try to develop one, or if your area would like to host a professional development opportunity to help garner interest in an affiliate and have the opportunity to network, TCTELA can help you get started. Please refer to the contact information below. Likewise, if your region or area has an affiliate but you are having trouble getting connected or need more information, please refer to the contacts here on the TCTELA website: <http://www.tctela.org/affiliates/>.

If you are interested in having your voice heard, the survey will remain open until late June 2013 if you would still like to contribute. The survey is located at <http://tinyurl.com/tctelasurvey2012>. The survey literally only takes a few minutes to answer the 6 main questions, and can take a bit longer if you choose to provide your responses to the optional open-ended questions.

To follow TCTELA on Facebook, find the page at <http://tinyurl.com/fb-TCTELA>, and on Twitter, @TCTELA or <http://www.twitter.com/TCTELA>.

Molly Adams, the current Vice President of Membership and Affiliates, and Kim Pinkerton, the current Vice President-Elect of Membership and Affiliates invite you to email at any time with questions, concerns, or ideas for getting these affiliates started in areas of need. Make your voice heard. TCTELA is here for you. fridayswithfrogs@gmail.com @finchgirl10



As a reader of this newsletter, a member of TCTELA and/or local affiliates, or a stakeholder in the literacy process in general, consider the map shown above of current affiliates and areas without affiliates. This indicates not only membership who attend the TCTELA conference and who join a local affiliate, but also

**Websites used for data

<http://www.localschooldirectory.com/state-schools/TX>

<http://teaching.about.com/od/ProfilesInEducation/a/Texas-Education.htm>

<http://texas.educationbug.org/public-schools/>



Achievement Awards in Writing

2013

Students Receiving Certificates for Superior Writing

TEXAS

The Hockaday School, Dallas

Jessica Cloud

The John Cooper School, The Woodlands

Molly Garrison

Keystone School, San Antonio

Garrett A. Hinck

MacArthur High School, San Antonio

Alex Goodman

Ursuline Academy of Dallas, Dallas

Nehaarika Mulukutla



Promising Young Writers Program

2013

Students Receiving Certificates of Recognition

TEXAS

Levine Academy, Dallas

Mira Fradkin



Program To Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines

2012 PRESLM Ranked Magazines

TEXAS

HIGHEST AWARD

Episcopal High School, 4650 Bissonnet St., Bellaire, TX 77401-3002

Light & Shadow

Faculty Advisor: Hillary Houle

Student Editor: Christina Eickenroht

The John Cooper School, 1 John Cooper Dr., The Woodlands, TX 77381-4499

Inkblots

Faculty Advisor: Peter Elliott

Student Editor: Vicky Rodriguez

Kealing Middle School, 1607 Pennsylvania Ave., Austin, TX 78702-2020

Inkblot

Faculty Advisor: Sarah Waggoner

Student Editors: Sophia Amstutz, Claire Cannatti, Megan Pratt, Ethan Russo

SUPERIOR—NOMINATED FOR HIGHEST AWARD

Abilene High School, 2800 N 6th St., Abilene, TX 79603-7190

Gallimaufry

Faculty Advisor: Seth Pace

Student Editors: Cristi McCoy, Morgan Page

Alamo Heights High School, 6900 Broadway St., San Antonio, TX 78209-3799

The Jabberwocky

Faculty Advisor: Kathleen Chupp

Student Editor: Laurel O'Neill

Churchill High School, 12049 Blanco Rd., San Antonio, TX 78216-2499

Savrola

Faculty Advisor: Benny Del Castillo

Student Editors: Missy Lombardo, Carolyn McDonald

Cypress Creek High School, 9815 Grant Rd., Houston, TX 77070-4599

Graffiti

Faculty Advisor: Leslie Laird

Student Editor: Haley Tudor

National Council of Teachers of English

1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096

Phone: 800-369-6283 Fax: 217-328-0977

Web: www.ncte.org



Program To Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines

2012 PRESLM Ranked Magazines

SUPERIOR—NOMINATED FOR HIGHEST AWARD

Keystone School, 119 E Craig Pl., San Antonio, TX 78212-3497

To Keep Things Whole

Faculty Advisor: Nicole Provencher

Student Editors: Gaby Bucay, Travis Hawk, Emily Hernandez

Klein High School, 16503 Stuebner Airline Rd., Spring, TX 77379-7376

Perspectives

Faculty Advisor: Christine Harrington

Student Editors: Brandon Ohl, Karen Yang

Klein Oak High School, 22603 Northcrest Dr., Spring, TX 77389-4499

Orsorum

Faculty Advisor: Karen Mastracchio

Student Editors: Kaitlyn Carr, Taylor Nawrocki

Plano East Senior High, 3000 Los Rios Blvd., Plano, TX 75074-3513

Synecdoche of Scrawls

Faculty Advisor: Diane Porter

Student Editors: Jerome Ballard, Christine Bonisch, Allison Morgan, Elizabeth Quigley, Allyson Rosenthal, Jirga Shah, Autumn Stimpson, Savannah Stimpson, Danielle Swernofsky

Saint Mary's Hall, 9401 Starcrest Dr., San Antonio, TX 78217-4199

The Walrus

Faculty Advisor: Amy Williams-Eddy

Student Editors: Susi Lopera, Sarah Talaat

Westlake High School, 4100 Westbank Dr., Austin, TX 78746-6599

The Final Draft

Faculty Advisor: Moira Longino

Student Editors: Sarah Berg, Mason Marrero

Westwood High School, 12400 Mellow Meadow Dr., Austin, TX 78750-1824

Frontage Roads

Faculty Advisor: Amber Drown

Student Editors: Sonali Arora, Leanne Chia, Ashley Chong, Jenna Falgout, Robina Ghosh, Elise Schmelzer, Joey Truty



Program To Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines

2012 PRESLM Ranked Magazines

EXCELLENT

Jackson Middle School, 4538 Vance Jackson Rd., San Antonio, TX 78230-5325

A Journey of Our Own

Faculty Advisor: Terry Shell

Student Editors: Samantha Delgado, Helen Reeves

Marcus High School, 5707 Morriss Rd., Flower Mound, TX 75028-3730

Insight

Faculty Advisor: Megan Youngblood

Student Editors: Arin Anderson, Ashley Hagan, Tori Thurman, Breyanna Washington

The Kinkaid School, 201 Kinkaid School Dr., Houston, TX 77024-7599

Falcon Wings

Faculty Advisors: Carolyn McCarthy, Angelique Jamail

Student Editors: Jinal Mehta, Elizabeth Studlick

The Oakridge School, 5900 W Pioneer Parkway, Arlington, TX 76013

Calliope

Faculty Advisor: Jared Colley

Student Editors: Jenny Ahn, Cari Bates, Pauline Bronstein, Susie Carovillano, Ben Fallis, Melissa Geisel, Nooshin Ghanbari, Madison Kline, Maren Miller, Faith Poynor, Rachel Terrill

ABOVE AVERAGE

Elkins High School, 7007 Knights Ct., Missouri City, TX 77459-6111

Elkins Literary Magazine

Faculty Advisor: Paula Jay

Student Editors: Kirsten Caleon, Chris Jordan, Emily Twa, Haris Vakil

Emery/Weiner School, 9825 Stella Link Rd., Houston, TX 77025-4604

Collage

Faculty Advisor: Margot Hiller

Student Editor: Alex Daily

Kinkaid Middle School, 201 Kinkaid School Dr., Houston, TX 77024-7504

Pen Power

Faculty Advisor: Ruth Stubbs

Student Editors: Neha Afzalpurkar, Julia Davis, Robert Delman, William Gage, John Goettee, Pierce Johnson, Sasha Mireskandari, Saskia Veldkamp, Faraz Virani, Grace Wimbish

State Coordinator: Martha Medlock

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