

The English Pub: ACTELA Newsletter

Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts



Letter from the President

ACTELA Board members were recently asked to consider the following writing prompt:

The end of the fall semester is a busy time for teachers, full of deadlines and holiday stress. It helps to pause and reflect on the points of pride from our programs and schools that we see as accomplishments. What should we know about your school?

Let us know how what you are proud of too!

Dear ACTELA Members,

Hello all! I hope everyone enjoyed a happy holiday break, spent time with family and friends, and found some time for yourselves!

As the new year approaches, I am reflecting on my teaching this past semester and I seem to focus on the theme from NCTE this year "Turning the Page." How am I going to "turn the page" in this upcoming spring semester? There are a few administrative things I want to change in my classroom, but I really want to



focus on turning the classroom over to my students when it comes to discussions. We did several Socratic Seminars in this last nine weeks with larger pieces of literature, but I really

want to flip everything we do (big or small) into this type of discussion. I am taking steps to work on this for the spring.

How will you "turn the page" this coming year? Send us your ideas and thoughts; we would love to hear from you! Happy New Year!

Cindy Green, ACTELA President

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Arkansas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts



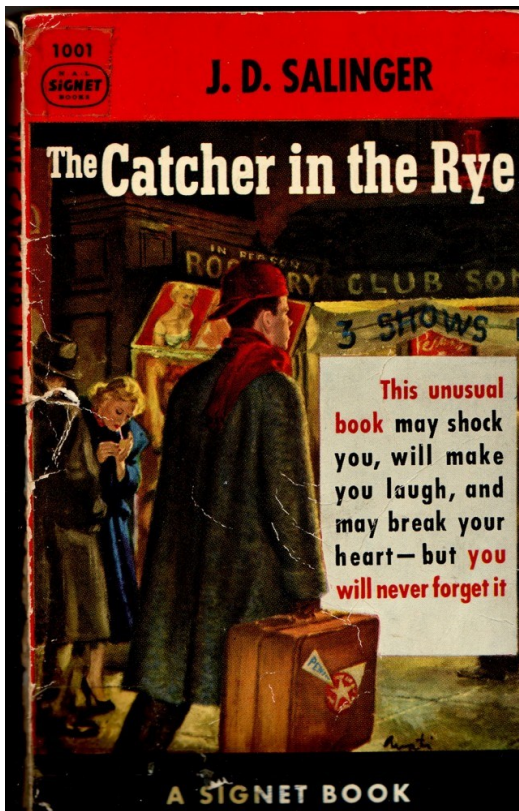
Salinger Still Echoes

By Dr. Kay Walter

One of the many highlights of NCTE is a visit to the Exhibit Hall. This year we stood in line by the hundreds, thousands, to wait our turn to flow down the escalator and through the doors in the vast cornucopia of information, gifts, and ideas on offer.

One of the most interesting booths was also one of the smallest displays—tucked away between two others, around a corner in a less-trafficked aisle. Jim Sadwith was there, giving away bookmarks and free previews of his movie, *Coming Through the Rye*. I took the opportunity to speak with Sadwith because my dean is a Salinger fan. I knew returning to Arkansas with Sadwith's autograph would be a good way for me to demonstrate to him the significance of the NCTE conference to my professional development.

I watched Sadwith's movie trailer and was impressed. The cast includes a big-name star, Chris Cooper, to play Salinger, and the film has an intimate, authentic feel that draws your attention. I was entirely the wrong audience for Sadwith, as I am a British literature specialist, but even I could see the importance of his movie.



Sadwith took the time to talk with me about his experience living, writing, and making the movie, and he wanted me particularly to know that the film is based in fact. More than once he told me “It’s me. I am that boy” which helps to explain its obvious authenticity. He also told me he would be glad to send free bookmarks to every student studying *Catcher in the Rye*. If teachers write to Sadwith and tell him how many students they have and where to send them, he will mail free bookmarks advertising his movie. These are attractive bookmarks featuring scenes from the film.

I recently wrote to Sadwith, saying the following:

Dear Jim,

When we spoke at NCTE in Atlanta, I told you my dean is a huge Salinger fan. He was very impressed that I brought him your autograph, has watched the trailer, loves it, and says he is ordering the movie for our department.

I am the editor of *The English Pub: ACTELA Newsletter*, which is the voice for spreading news among our NCTE affiliate in Arkansas. In the upcoming issue, I am going to promote your movie and tell all the English and language arts teachers in our state about your offer of free bookmarks to teachers who are teaching Salinger in their classrooms.

Is there anything else you'd like to say to Arkansas English and language arts teachers or that you'd like me to mention on your behalf?

I loved the trailer, have told many people about it, and can't wait to watch the movie when my dean gets it for us.

Keep up the good work!

Kay

Here is Jim Sadwith's reply:

Hi, Kay—

Thank you very much for your email! I'm so glad your dean was impressed. Also thanks for your plan to publicize the film in your newsletter. You can mention that I have arranged with some schools to Skype with classes after they've seen the film and talk about my high school/Salinger experiences, filmmaking, writing, adapting material for stage and screen, etc. So that is always out there as a possibility. This is a film that seems to touch people across the board—high school students and baby boomers and all those in between. I'm sure it will do the same for the readers of your Newsletter.

All the best,

Jim

If you are a J. D. Salinger fan, if you already teach *Catcher in the Rye* to your students, this is a connection you don't want to miss. If you've been looking for a book to engage your students, this connection may give you a new work to consider. Remember that grants are available

to help with the cost of purchasing class sets of books. This might give someone ideas about applying for an Arnold Mini-Grant.

Salinger is a notoriously reticent figure, and authentic information about him is regrettably scarce. Sadwith's film marks an important contribution to the field of Salinger criticism, and his willingness to interact with classroom teachers and student instruction make Sadwith a wealthy resource we can appreciate in Arkansas even if we must go to extraordinary lengths to get an opportunity to see his movie.

Here are the links Jim Sadwith provides for the trailer to his movie and other relevant websites:

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmPzNuwXKYk>

Audience: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pIjmsHUwo0>

Website: <http://comingthroughtheryemovie.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ComingThroughTheRye>



If you make use of the movie in your classroom, let us know how it influences student learning and achievement. If your students Skype with Sadwith, we want to know about that too. If you know of other recent sources of Salinger research useful to classroom instruction, write and tell us the story. Together we can compile a list of resources Arkansas teachers can use.



Image of [James Sadwith](#) borrowed from his Twitter feed

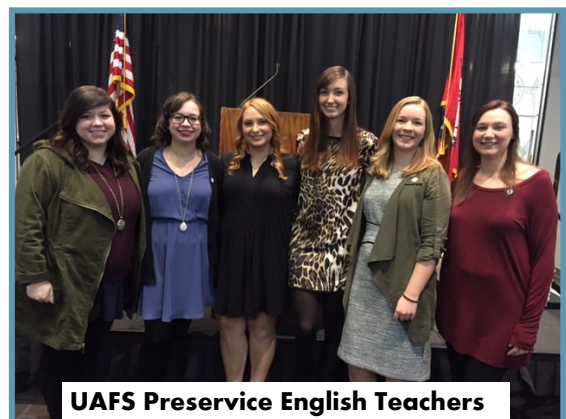
Points of Pride

- ◆ My students are the best thing about University of Arkansas at Monticello, and as an alumni I can vouch for the fact that the greatness continues for a lifetime! We also have programs in Forestry and Natural Resources and Jazz Studies which are quickly gaining global reputations. This year sixteen of my students accompanied me to ACC and made presentations of their research at the Preservice Roundtable. I am proud of each one of them for their willingness to take part in the professional life of a teacher, and I am especially proud of my dean for seeing the importance of helping to fund their travel experience. I believe the early conferencing experience gives my students a head start at their careers and a foundation for their graduate studies. **Kay Walter**

- ◆ The fall semester provides many opportunities to see our students strive and succeed, however failures are often the seeds of future growth. That is where we spent much of last semester, failing again and again. My students often laugh because I am a failure based teacher. We develop hard writing prompts and difficult tasks, and hand in hand we work through those as a class. We see each other through many trials and over many obstacles to accomplish our goals. One such student, this fall, was finally able to write a paper he was proud of, after weeks of trying to give up, and feeling he couldn't. We, as a class, completed peer reviews, assisted in research challenges, and worked as editors to accomplish this goal. It was not unnoticed how one student who had been struggling himself was both able to benefit from the process and contribute to another student's success. We found hope in our despair and completed the writing together. I leave fall behind excited about what spring holds. Happy Holidays. **Grover Welch**



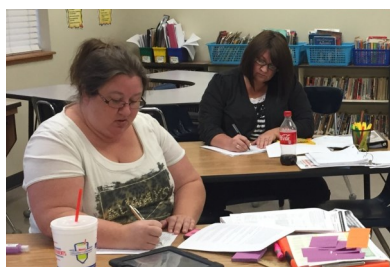
- ◆ The following students were honored at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith School of Education Pinning Ceremony on Thursday, 12/8/16. These students completed their internship during the fall 2016 and graduated 12/15/16 earning their degrees in English with Teacher Licensure: Lauren Tipton, Allison Harrison, Katie Cervantes, Courtney Holt, Angela Holohan, Ashley Gorham—hurrah for our student members! **Janine Chitty**



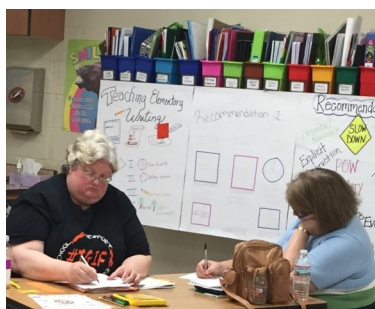
UAFS Preservice English Teachers

- ◆ While there are many accomplishments from various schools, I'd really like to specifically brag on the Newport School District. Over the past several months, the 5th and 6th grade teachers have met regularly to look at data, learn about the newest assessments and curriculum frameworks, and practice new instructional strategies. Not only are the teachers from multiple disciplines meeting together, but they also including the resource teachers and Gifted/Talented teacher. Collectively, all of the teachers are coming together as one in order to best serve all students.

While these Professional Learning Communities are in their infancy, there are already signs of improved instruction and student achievement. These teachers are truly growing through their professional learning communities and building great capacity among themselves. **Dawn Bessee**



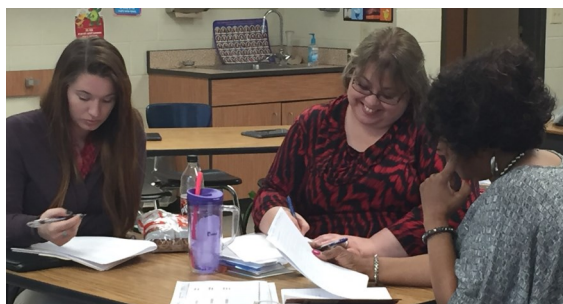
The 5th grade math teacher (front) and literacy teacher (back) are reading about effective writing instruction practices for mid-level students



The resource teachers for upper elementary grades work together on a project.



They are collaborating to analyze infographics for craft and content.



The 6th grade literacy teachers (center and right) include student intern in discussions about text complexity.



Newport's sixth grade math and science teacher (far left) contributes to the discussion on complex texts in the content areas.

- ◆ One thing I've been really excited about is being able to have AMAZING Socratic Seminars with my students over video call. We have an inner/outer circle and my kids are thriving and I am completely taking a backseat and letting them take the reigns. I was also asked to write about it for a Stenhouse book on Technology in the Classroom! I'm just so proud of my kids and how they are growing in their discussions of literature and how being in so many different locations did not hinder them at all. **Cindy Green**

Upcoming Endeavor

Board member Grover Welch has plans to share with us a civil rights activity his students have been busy creating. His explanation, and their letters, will appear in our next issue, so be on the lookout for interesting and exciting ideas to come!

Riding the Bus

by Donna Wake

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the national NCTE conference in Atlanta, Georgia. My travel adventure started early one Thursday morning as I began the road trip to the conference with eight other teachers. My colleague, Jeff Whittingham, and I had pooled our university travel money to rent a van to take teachers from local schools with us. Our van held teachers not only from our university, but also from 4 different local school districts. Many of these teachers were first time attendees to the conference, and I was excited to share the experience with them. I was even more proud to present at the conference the work we are doing in central Arkansas with these fine educators. Of course, being ELA educators, we engaged in an extended writing marathon across the entirety of our trip as Jeff led us in writing our experiences into a Renku poem.

As always, I left the conference feeling empowered to change the world! I had been given the gift of time to spend with dedicated K-16 educators from around the



The Arkansas affiliate was well-represented at NCTE in November. UCA's van made the travel enjoyable for many.

country. I was inspired by the work of educators all around me who seemed to share my same passion for social justice, my passion for the social and emotional well-being of the students with whom we work, and my passion for the integration of technology to transform our pedagogy.

I think these passions are critical to my identity as an educator. And it is precious to me that I remain connected to those foundational aspects of my teacher-self. Conferences like NCTE allow me to “re-fuel” my pas-

sions as I affirm that there are others out there who feel as I feel and believe as I believe. I know the work ELA teachers do can transform the lives of students and the face of pedagogy. ELA teachers offer powerful tools to encourage students and to engage in the work of teaching and learning. We use these tools to offer learners opportunities to share more purposefully in their own education. We feel strongly that the ideals of progressive pedagogy lead to schooling contexts that empower and engage the learner, transform the lives of students and change the communities around them.

Teachers are positioned now more than ever to capitalize on the models of critical and constructivist pedagogies. Progressive pedagogies vary in practice by movement and by underlying philosophy. However, progressive pedagogies hold some underlying practices as foundational: including students as active participants in the curriculum who learn by doing, student collaboration, student voice and choice, teachers as facilitators, curriculum influenced by student needs and interests, curriculum that is personalized and differentiated, a focus on conceptual learning, and assessment that is formative and includes alternative forms.

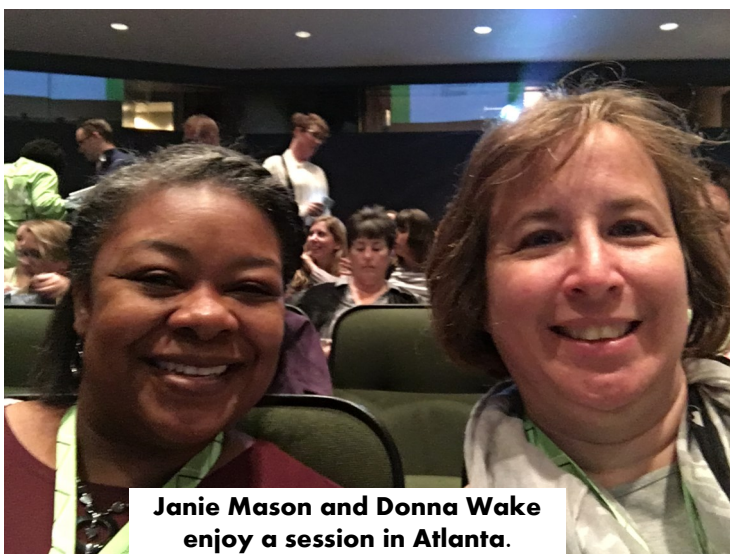
In addition, progressive pedagogy models often draw on the community as a resource with students going out into the community and community members coming into the classroom. These models often include service-learning projects featuring pragmatic and experiential projects curriculum with connections to real-life issues and events. For these reasons, many models of progressive pedagogy focus on so-

cial responsibility, social activism, social justice, and democratic education.

Curriculum based on these models allow students to take an active role in



Gathering for meals gave us an opportunity to share our experience of NCTE.



Janie Mason and Donna Wake enjoy a session in Atlanta.

learning. Using these ideals, learners in ELA classrooms can connect with information and people. They can engage in targeted research as they curate information around authentic, relevant topics and capitalize on their own needs, wants, and interests. They can create original products showcasing the power of student voice and choice.

The NCTE conference brought that message home to me again powerfully. The conference gave me time to connect with other teachers from my own “neck of the woods” as well as connect with teachers far removed from my local contexts. But the message I received throughout the conference was the same – ELA teachers make a difference. For that reason we must advocate for ourselves, for our students, and for our schools and communities.

I would encourage all ELA teachers to try and attend NCTE just once. Fortunately, the conference is in St. Louis next year. Perhaps we can consider working together to

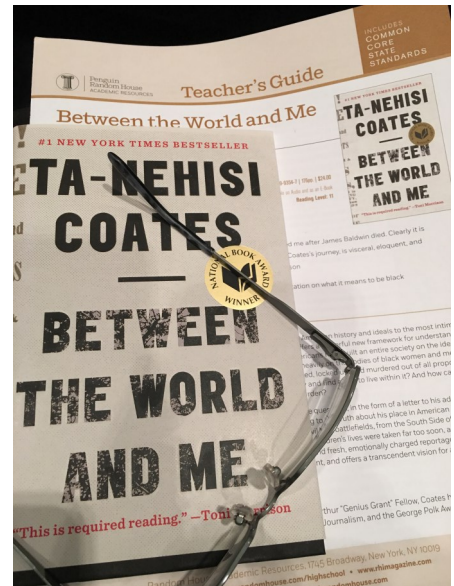
find ways to attend November 16-19, 2017. For information on the conference, please visit the website at

<http://www.ncte.org/annual>. And perhaps consider writing a proposal as well. I know teachers out there are doing amazing things with their

students. Perhaps it’s time for you to tell your stories.



NCTE made us all proud to be page turners.



Attending NCTE is an experience we should all share.

NCTE MEMORIES

NCTE WEWOKIES

Those of us who went to Atlanta to represent Arkansas at the national conference had a wonderful time, missed those of you who didn't, and brought home some rich memories we want to share. The following pages offer some glimpses into the fun we had.

Start planning now to be with us in St. Louis November 16th through 19th, 2017. The call for program proposals is open through January 5th here:

<http://www.ncte.org/annual/call-2017>

The theme for NCTE 2017 is

Teaching Our Students Today, Tomorrow, Forever: Recapturing Our Voices, Our Agency, Our Mission.

Enjoy this journey through our Atlanta adventures as you make plans for St. Louis!



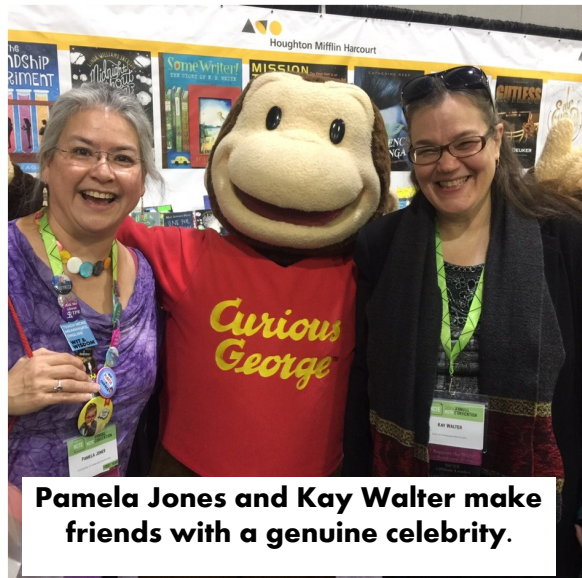
Donna Wake and Janie Mason. In the registration room, are already finding fun at the NCTE conference.



The walk to the NCTE venue led through a picturesque district of Atlanta.



Pamela is the undisputed queen of button and ribbon collecting.



Pamela Jones and Kay Walter make friends with a genuine celebrity.



Pamela and Kay pose for a selfie over dinner at the Hard Rock Café.



Arkansas was well represented at the Affiliate Breakfast.



Part of the fun of conferences is visiting the Vendor's Hall where every booth has free treats on offer for literacy enthusiasts. One visit results in a bounty that is hard to carry home!



By the second visit to the Vendor's Hall, you learn to take an empty suitcase with you.



Dixie Keyes is a past president of ACTELA and our regional representative for NCTE.



ACC's 2014 Featured Author, Crystal Allen, autographs her new novel for Kay Walter.



Pamela Jones, 2016 Arkansas Teacher for the Dream, thoroughly enjoyed her first NCTE conference.



A Couple of Native Texans: Kay Walter, editor of *The English Pub*, with Jocelyn Chadwick, NCTE Vice President



NCTE always offers a warm welcome to English and Language Arts teachers. At the annual conference, you suddenly find yourself among thousands of people who understand your passions.



Because some bathrooms were designated gender neutral, there was never a need for waiting in line to powder your nose.



AEJ Update

The second issue of our new peer-reviewed publication is nearly done. Final layouts for the journal's production are now underway. Be on the lookout for the next issue to appear before the new year begins.

<http://arkansas-english-journal.weebly.com/>

NCTE News



ACTELA claimed several awards in Atlanta at the Affiliate Breakfast on Sunday morning. Give a rousing *sotto voce* cheer for us for winning the following:

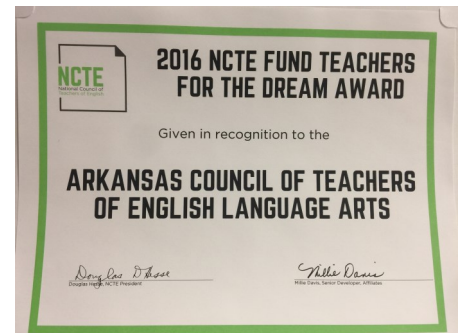
Affiliate of Excellence Award (second year)

Multicultural Award

Teacher for the Dream Grant Award



ACTELA's president, Cindy Green, poses with our Excellence award.



Arkansas's affiliate is excellent in so many ways!

Arkansas Anthology Update

The latest issue of *Arkansas Anthology* is available online in a digital version under the INITIATIVES tab on our website. Print versions exist only in limited quantities. Contact Aaron Hall for further information about access or submissions.

Exciting changes are in store for *Arkansas Anthology 2017*. Next year's online edition will be fully interactive with additional elements accessible from the website. Student submissions are currently invited for the 2017 issue. Send your best creative efforts

to ARAnthology@gmail.com.

Some ACC Reflections

- ◆ **Kai Coggins:** The afternoon session at the Butler Center which preceded the evening social event was inspirational. Kai read poetry to us—her own and her students’—and told us the story of Sandra Cisneros’s visit to her classroom. When she asked about our own students, I was proud to tell her “These are my students!” About ten preservice members were in attendance with me.
- ◆ **Sonia Gensler:** The ACTELA Luncheon talk was wonderful too. Sonia’s discussion there and later in her breakout session invited audience member to approach writing instruction in new ways and think of students as authors.
- ◆ **Preservice Roundtable:** Salon A was filled to the brim with bright and enthusiastic young teachers-in-training. They presented research on everything from Shakespeare to Dividing with Manipulatives. From the audience’s reaction, the future of literacy instruction in Arkansas seems to be in good hands.
- ◆ **2016 Pittman Lifetime Service Award:** Our own Membership Coordinator, Jeff Wittingham, was surprised to receive the Pittman award at the ACTELA Luncheon. The honor is well-earned, and the look on his face was priceless.

Website Improvements

Our webmaster, Tyler McBride, has completed the improvements to our website as we move to a Weebly format. Visitors now discover an exciting new look in our online presence. You can find us at ACTELA.WEEBLY.COM. Our newsletter are archived under the BLOG & NEWSLETTERS tab, and our journal is linked to our INITIATIVES tab. Visit often to stay up-to-date on ACTELA news.

ACC Responses

Veteran teachers understand clearly how important it is to gather together for conferencing, sharing ideas and drawing strength from a network of professionals who support our efforts and sympathize with our passions, but do you ever wonder what the unfledged members think of ACC? I requested feedback from the new preservice members from UAFS, ASU, and UAM who took part in our Preservice Roundtable session, and their reflections on the conference and its benefits to their professional development reveal keen insights. Their words speak well of their instructors, themselves, their universities, and the future of literacy education in our state. Their professionalism and eloquence reinforces my belief that English and Language Arts instruction is in good hands in Arkansas.

If you have a response about ACC 2016 you would like to share, write to me. We'd like to hear from classroom instructors too, and we are always looking for ways to make our affiliate and our conference more relevant and supportive for our members. Dr. Kay J. Walter

Comments from our newest members about this year's state conference:

- I want to praise all the people involved in the ACC Conference. It was an exciting time for me as I have never attended a conference before and enjoyed the education I received from my experience. I found checking into the hotel was interesting and educational. I also found registering for the conference quite an experience. There were many people there, vendors everywhere I turned! The exhibits were fascinating and I wanted to stay and talk to each one of them because it all seemed so valuable to me. The sessions I attended were very educational and I wanted to attend every one of them. I couldn't, of course, but I did attend those I thought were most relevant to my future as a teacher. The thought that went into these presentations were great! The luncheons I attended were very elaborate and very different from a regular family reunion or a business lunch and I appreciate all who were there. All the speakers were exciting to listen to and I look forward to attending next year! **Pamela Jones, UAM**
- I felt so privileged being able to present at the ACTELA conference! Before arriving, I felt I would be out of my league--an intern among seasoned teachers. However, I was pleasantly surprised to see teachers in all stages of careers! The sessions I attended were engaging and beneficial. I learned instructional approaches, specific lesson plans, and even sat in on a discussion over state standard updates, changes, and what it means for teachers. During my [presentation], I felt a bit nervous, but still at ease knowing I was in a room full of what I call "my own," teachers supportive and eager to

see what I had to share with them. I really enjoyed my first ACTELA conference. ACTELA is a great conference for all teachers, no matter where they are in their career. You're never done learning! **Courtney Bryan, UAFS**

- My first time at the ACC Conference was definitely an exciting experience, and I wish I could have attended the entire conference to be able to experience more of it. **Erika Barnett, UAM**
- The ACTELA conference was a very enlightening experience. **Ashton Free, UAM**
- The Arkansas Curriculum Conference opened many new doors for me as an aspiring educator. I had the opportunity to present at the state level for the first time and meet other educators. I was able to expand my horizons and explore different methods of curriculum implementation. The chance to step out of my "college-student-shoes" and into the shoes of a professional aspiring educator has shed light on the truth that teaching is what I was meant to do. I look forward to future opportunities to [conference with my colleagues]. **Katie Hayne, ASU Jonesboro**
- I really enjoyed my experience at ACC. I had the opportunity to meet some peers in different fields of study and educate them in the ways of Shakespeare. I also took the opportunity to learn some things about their fields of study. I think ACC is a priceless experience [for preservice teachers] that really helped to shape me as a student. I made a few new friends who want to learn more about Shakespeare, so it was a very rewarding experience. **Timothy Rushing, UAM**
- As future [teacher], interacting with veteran teachers and other pre-service teachers was a great opportunity to network and make connections. I learned so much in the sessions I attended and even from my own short presentation. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to both attend and present. ACC was definitely a positive learning experience. **Allison Harrison, UAFS**
- [Attending ACC 2016] was a lot of fun. [The conference] was a great opportunity to meet new people and learn new things. It was a chance to get connections and find things out that may be outside our normal fields. [There were] booths which gave away free stuff and I won some books at [the ACTELA] luncheon. I would love to go again next year! **Alex Grubbs, UAM**
- Even though I am a music major, I was still able to [benefit from the conference and to] find music instructors among the vendors. The vendors and I talked about the importance of music and how it can be used as an outlet for expression, an educational tool. This shows how close-knit the teaching community is in Arkansas. **Mark Sullivan, UAM**
- Upon attending this conference, I was really floored at how interconnected all of the teachers were. They didn't know each other, as most came from such different areas, however, during presentations, it was as if the majority of them were connected at the mind. No one had trouble following an idea a presenter was speaking on, and as presentations got rolling, more and more people were being involved



learners, asking questions and expanding on things they felt needed expanded on. I thought that was vital because education varies so much from school to school. I think that students everywhere deserve the same education, to learn the same amount of knowledge, and to walk away with confidence that they couldn't have received a better education at another school. Therefore, seeing all the teachers with this similar way of thinking gave me a lot of hope. I think part of that can be attributed to attendance at conferences like ACTELA, where the teachers do get to work together, and learn, share, and thrive as a unit. I think bringing some varied Ethos into these things is important, too. As teachers, we all have a certain level of credibility that comes with those degree; however, seeing established authors and higher education teachers mingling and teaching along with basic middle level educators gave the conference something more. I think it was interesting to see teachers learning from these sources and even better to see them keeping up on the same levels. I don't think we ever really stop being students. I was incredibly thankful for this experience because it was actually my first conference! It gave me a lot of insight on the inner workings of a conference, and kind of prepared me for the ones I am going on to attend in the spring. **Christa McDaniel, UAM**

- o This fall I attended my first Arkansas Curriculum Conference in Little Rock. I attended as a graduate preservice presenter and ACTELA student member. My experience exceeded my expectations and will be forever cherished. I had the opportunity to be a roundtable presenter and chose my research topic to be “Tug of War: Staging Shakespeare Then and Now.” [This] presentation was such an invaluable experience. Being able to present my research to current educators provided me with an opportunity to share a topic I am very passionate about as well as get feedback from educators in the field. I believe it is so important to seek wisdom and guidance from those who have experience. Not only did the preservice presentation grant me feedback and knowledge, but it also granted me confidence. I’ve heard it said “the best way to see how well you know your content is to teach it.” Presenting to educators, as well as my peers, allowed me to gauge my content knowledge. I was better able to know my strengths and weaknesses on staging Shakespeare. My audience seemed genuinely intrigued and offered much encouragement and support. Aside from my presentation, there was so much more that attributed to my ACC experience. I attended seven other presentations and even had the opportunity to preside over a session. Listening to these presenters speak so passionately about their topics was so inspiring to me. They truly love their content and they love students. Being surrounded by hundreds of men and women who share the same desires and passions as I do is such an overwhelming feeling. To know there are so many [teachers] sharing ideas and supporting one another is so encouraging. ACC provided us preservice students with the opportunity to network with teachers, administrators, and even published authors. I only wish there had been more hours in a day so I could take full advantage of all the sessions that were offered. I am grateful to be a member of ACTELA and [for] the opportunities the ACC provided me as a prospective teacher. [Attending the conference] not only gifts students with a sea of knowledge, it also gifts us with confidence and a support group that now feels like a family. **Brandi Mize, UAM**



Coen Meets Shakespeare

Are you, like me, a Coen brothers fan? If so, this is a video treat for you. Particularly if you are familiar with *The Big Lebowski*, this dramatic presentation is sure to make you chuckle. Maybe someone could undertake staging the entire play? Let us know if you're up for the challenge. I would find a performance which mingled these two of my favorites irresistible!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRNLRCoPzbs&feature=email>

Literacy and the Public



2016 Drew County Fair Booth presented by Town and Country Quilters EHC, designed by Dr. Kay Walter

by Dr. Kay Walter

As advocates for literacy in all aspects of and throughout our lives, we must remember to make good use of opportunities to share our love of language and literature beyond the walls of our classrooms. In Drew County, this ribbon-winning fair booth prepared by Town and Country Quilters EHC promotes literacy by borrowing a quote from Rudyard Kipling, the Nobel Prize-winning author of *The Jungle Books*. His poem, "Recessional," includes the

refrain chosen as the title for the fair booth. The educational handout presented to the public audience included the poem in its entirety.

If you've found opportunities to include literacy instruction in your extracurricular lives, let us know so we can celebrate your successes and find ideas for spreading our own efforts throughout Arkansas.

News and Notes

- Dixie Keyes is enjoying her first year as full professor—Congratulations, Dixie!
- Several board members, including the editors of our journal and our newsletter, are awaiting word about their applications for promotion. Our fingers are crossed for all of you—hurrah and good luck!
- Pamela Jones is receiving her Associate of Arts degree this month's commencement ceremony at UAM—Congratulations, Pamela!
- Brandi Mize is making plans to teach her first Fundamentals of English class at UAM in the spring—Way to go, Brandi!
- Britney Andrews completed her MSE degree and graduated this month—ACTELA is proud of you, Britney!
- Leanna Morris anticipates completing her BA degree with an English major in May and is looking forward to beginning her MAT coursework and teaching career in fall 2017—Look out world; here she comes!
- Mark Sullivan completes his BA degree in Music, specializing in Voice next May and is currently searching for an appropriate graduate program to continue his studies in dramatic and vocal arts—Break a leg, Mark!



- Plans are in progress for a travel seminar to Britain to study **Celtic Origins of British Literature**. They include a meeting on the Isle of Wight with the world's leading expert in Julia Margaret Cameron as well as touring King Arthur's birthplace, the origins of Cheddar cheese, a bookshop village, the castle where King James was crowned, Culloden Battlefield, and the world's largest bookstore. For more information, email the instructor, Dr. Kay Walter, walter@uamont.edu

Travel Seminar to Great Britain

Graduate or **Undergraduate** Credit in English Offered

Through University of Arkansas at Monticello

Itinerary for May 2017

- 16th overnight flight from Little Rock to London Heathrow
- 17th arrive Heathrow, collect hire car, drive to Isle of Wight <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out/regionlondonseast/isle-of-wight>
- 18th tour Isle of Wight <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-needles-headland-and-tennyson-down> , meet with Colin Ford <http://www.getty.edu/publications/virtuallibrary/0892366818.html> , drive to Tintagel <http://www.thisisnorthcornwall.com/tintagel.html>
- 19th tour Tintagel Castle <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/tintagel-castle/> , drive to Cheddar <http://cheddarvillage.co.uk/>
- 20th tour Cheddar Gorge <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cheddar-gorge> , drive to Brecon Beacons <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/brecon-beacons>
- 21st tour Tintern Abbey https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tintern_Abbey and Hay-on-Wye <http://www.hay-on-wye.co.uk/> , drive to Bewdley <https://neilsinden.wordpress.com/author/neilsinden/>
- 22nd complete service learning project in Wyre Forest <http://www.wyreclt.org.uk/> , drive to Coniston Coppermines <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/coniston-coppermines>
- 23rd tour Brantwood <http://www.brantwood.org.uk/> , drive to Stirling <https://www.syha.org.uk/where-to-stay/lowlands/stirling.aspx>
- 24th tour Stirling Castle <http://www.stirlingcastle.gov.uk/> , drive to Inverness <https://www.syha.org.uk/where-to-stay/highlands/inverness.aspx>
- 25th tour Culloden Battlefield <http://www.nts.org.uk/Culloden/Home/> , drive to Pitlochry <https://www.syha.org.uk/where-to-stay/highlands/pitlochry.aspx>
- 26th tour Killiecrankie Visitor Center <http://www.nts.org.uk/Property/Killiecrankie/> , drive to Alston <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/alston>
- 27th drive to Hartington Hall <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/hartington-hall> , <https://www.chatsworth.org/>
- 28th drive to Oxford <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/oxford>
- 29th tour Blackwells <https://www.blackwell.co.uk/rarebooks/> , drive to London, drop off hire car, tube to St Pauls <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/london-st-pauls>
- 30th fly to Arkansas
-

For further information, contact the instructor, **Dr. Kay Walter** at walter@uamont.edu

We are here to represent

YOU!

All ACTELA members are represented by a board from geographical regions which cover the entire state. Get to know your representative board members. They are available to share your concerns and victories with the affiliate as a whole. Email contact with your representative is linked to our webpage. These are some of the ACTELA officers who serve you on the board:

Cindy Green, President

Sunny Styles-Foster, Vice President

Janine Chitty, Treasurer

Jeff Wittingham, Membership Chairman

Kay Walter, Newsletter Editor

Dixie Keyes, Past President

Donna Wake, Past President

Arkansas is Excellent.

In Atlanta, ACTELA was honored with its second NCTE Affiliate of Excellence Award. We were recognized for “high standards of performance for affiliate programming” which include regular publication of our newsletter, community involvement, advocacy, curriculum development, increase of membership, publication of our journal, co-sponsorship of ACC, celebration of cultural diversity, leadership training, and development of a strategic plan among other criteria. Congratulations to us for being so

GREAT!

Global Perspective

Revisiting a Classic: Donald Measham

by

Dr. Kay Walter, University of Arkansas at Monticello

Followers of this newsletter are already aware of my frequent travels to the United Kingdom with students eager to study British literature. The opportunities these travels afford me to study in the Bodleian Libraries, network with literacy enthusiasts in a variety of fields, and make new friends among those who admire John Ruskin are priceless. Some of you may know of my recent election to Companionship in the Guild of St George. Fellow Companions have made my students welcome, supported my own research and professional development, and visited in Arkansas to guest lecture to students, faculty, staff, and community groups at my university. One of the Companions I met on a recent Companions Weekend is Donald Measham.

Measham is currently retired from a long and successful career in literacy education in Britain. His credentials include editing *Staple: New Writing*, a journal globally recognized for introducing new poets. Here are Measham's words about its reputation and readership:

Staple was reckoned in the top five in the UK by the Welsh arts Council. It was taken by the Sorbonne via an amazing old ex-pat, who made them the subject of seminars there, and by the Vatican (through a Press Office)!

The publication which first drew him to my attention, though, is an early volume *Fourteen: Autobiography of an Age Group* originally published in 1965 by Cambridge University Press and republished by Lulu with additional material to update the stories it tells under the title *Fourteen Revisited* in 2009. *Fourteen Revisited* is a masterpiece in revealing the challenges of teen learners to absorb our lessons in English and Language Arts. While an overly-hasty glance might suppose much of it dated, the lessons it offers current teachers and learners are legion.

I plan to review this book and detail my



own observations at length in later publications, but for now I want only to bring it to your attention as an engaging and informative text, a standard in its field, and an essential read for anyone teaching low-achieving, at-risk, or middle years readers and writers. Here is how Measham describes the learning environment he taught in as the book came into being:

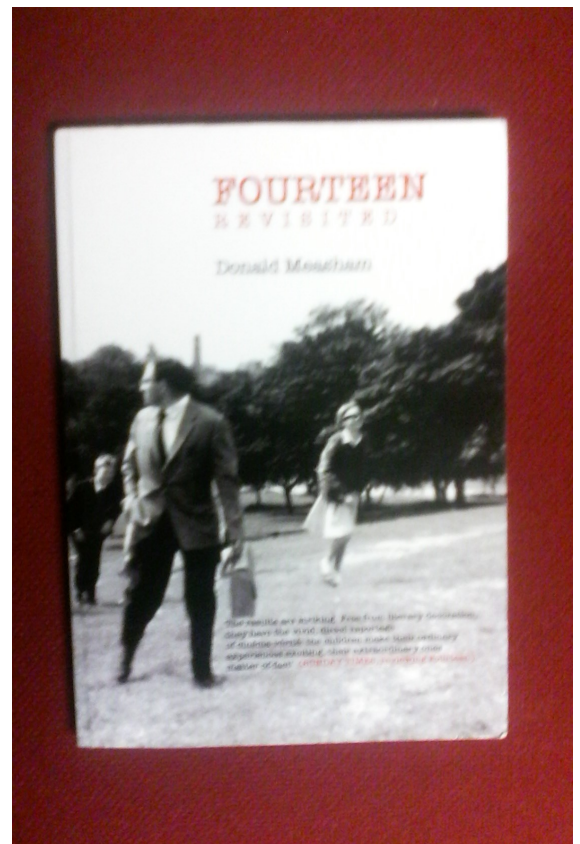
The actual setting was Hockley in Essex. A rather uncomfortable train for commuting to London, but quicker access to Southend-on-Sea (actually Thames Estuary). Some of the surrounding settlements though are quite remote, as a surrounding network of rivers make travel difficult and prone to flooding.

To me, this sounds very much akin to the Mississippi Delta region of Arkansas, near where I now teach. In a recent email, Measham described to me the high-stakes testing young learners faced which gave rise to the development of the assignment he gave his students:

The school was one of the last purpose-built sec mods (but, sensibly co-ed) – for pupils who have failed the notorious 11+ selection exam. The best thing about that was that its work was restricted to non-examinable work. The school leaving age was then 15: O Levels being taken by grammar schools and comprehensives at 16. But what a mess!

Thus, the work that the children did for me was a conscious landmark in an important ‘free’ bit of their life: 14. It was not assessed. It was not ‘Homework’. It was a continuous piece of writing and experience for class and reader, in the first instance, me!

In these words we find the commonality of English and Language Arts lessons around the world: audience, message, purpose. How Measham presented the assignment and how the development of writing skills progressed is detailed in *Fourteen Revisited*.



This copy of Measham's book was presented to the editor of our newsletter by the author as a gift during the summer of 2016.

I describe their books' process in the present book's commentary. The best part of the work for the class and me were the feedback sessions, when I read aloud with small interactions while returning their exercise books one by one, publicly. Note: Loose paper would not have worked . . . continuing, purposeful, page-filling was essential.

If you struggle to believe in the effectiveness of writing practice for low-achieving students, if you wonder what inexperienced writers have to teach us, if a naïve perspective can warm your heart and renew your vision of literacy instruction as an advocacy for our future, *Fourteen Revisited* is an essential read for you. Measham's view of the writers and their work is stark and revealing. Here are his ideas about the most important take-aways from the book:

The two key things which I'd like to stress are:

- (1) This was the last generation whose early impressions were not strongly influenced by TV. Very few Brits had TV in their home before 1953 – Coronation of HM Elizabeth II.
- (2) There was still considerable war damage in London and other cities when the children's recollections were being called upon.

Just as his students did, and all thoughtful writers do, Measham anticipates the response of his audience. Perhaps you will find your own thoughts echoed in his predictions:



Donald Measham with his wife, Joan Measham, in 2012

Are there things that the Brits' 14 years of experience and recollection would make you say?

That wouldn't happen now.

That couldn't happen here.

That could only happen in Britain.

I don't believe it!

Why?

Why indeed? And what lessons can we learn from Measham's experience with his fourteen-year-olds? How can apply such lessons to our twenty-first century teaching in distant Arkansas? I challenge you to read

his book and discover for yourself the parallels I see as evident and the differences which highlight the need for strong and growing literacy instruction in Arkansas today.

It was a great joy and an honor for me to meet the author of a classic text of the UK Children's Writing Movement last summer. It is a delight to know him as a new friend and to find his instructions, advice, and progress report so meaningful in my own classrooms. *Fourteen Revisited* is available here:

https://www.amazon.com/Fourteen-Revisited-Donald-Measham/dp/1409262790/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1483565925&sr=1-4&keywords=donald+measham

If you have questions, reflections, or ideas you'd like me to pass along to the author, send them to me at walter@uamont.edu Donald Measham will be reading our newsletter and would, I think, be glad to join in our conversation.

Help

Wanted

Do you have experience studying or teaching abroad? Do you know colleagues who do? Have you had literary experiences while travelling that you can share? If so, you have a vital Global Perspective, and we want to hear about it. Send us your ideas and photos to help us understand how English and Language Arts instruction in Arkansas fits into the context of global literacy instruction. It's easy to see ourselves as separated from a larger canvas, and it helps define our goals and successes when we can focus on the bigger picture. Get involved and share your ideas and contacts with ACTELA!

How Will You Turn the Page?

Our next issue of the newsletter will consider what we are doing to fulfill the new branding of NCTE, Turning the Page. How do you plan to implement being a Page Turner in your professional life? Send ideas to our newsletter editor at walter@uamont.edu



Bright Ideas Wanted

Have ideas you'd like board members to discuss in our newsletter?

Send them to our newsletter editor at walter@uamont.edu

Email Contacts for Questions/Comments

| | |
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