

# 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:

**March is Women's History Month which celebrates the contributions of women throughout history and society. What women paved the road for your professional and academic success, and why should women continue to break barriers?**

Their answers begin on page two. If you have additional ideas, share them with our readers by emailing the newsletter editor **Dr Kay J. Walter**.

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#### Dear ACTELA Members,

Greetings!

We are on our way to warmer weather, spring flowers, and testing season! I know that testing is not something we want to think about, but it is something that we all must endure as educators.

I encourage you not to lose sight of your students and the extra stress that comes with standardized testing.

When I was in the classroom, I remember having kids who would make themselves physically ill from the stress of testing. It was important for me to remind them that they were smart,

capable individuals and that if they came in and tried each day to the best of their ability, then that was all I could ask.

Trying to overdo test prep in the weeks before didn't help most students, but playing fun review games and reminding them about strategies that worked always seemed to allow the pressure to subside.

So as you are preparing for that time of year, please let your students know that you support them, that you are there for them, and that you are proud of them no matter what.

*Sunny Styles-Foster,  
ACTELA President*



### Stay in Touch!

Visit our website: [www.actela.weebly.com](http://www.actela.weebly.com)  
and LIKE our newsletter!

Email our editor: [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)

Or Friend us on Facebook:  
Arkansas Council of Teachers of  
English Language Arts





- Dr. Alice Hines taught British Literature at Hendrix College and was / is a legend in her own time. When I started at Hendrix, her 18th Century Brit Lit was the first class I took in the major. The woman was inspiring. She was captivating. She clearly loved her work, and she held high expectations for those of us in her classes. She never used our first names, and only referred to us as "Mr." and "Mrs." showing us the same respect that she demanded for herself. I never earned more than a "B" in her class, but I know when I earned that "B", that I had EARNED that "B", and I was proud of myself. She taught me to write. She taught me to think. She taught me to question. I saw her as a role model, and I continue to see her as a role model to this day.

*Donna Wake, University of Central Arkansas*

- As a male in elementary education, I have stood on the shoulders of many strong women. This began with the teachers I shared hallways with throughout my public school career and then the strong female administrators who helped guide me during that time. As a parent of two daughters, I believe women should continue to break barriers. I encourage my daughters to never let anything stand in their way. I hope I am laying the groundwork for them to break barriers in their future.

*Jeff Wittingham, University of Central Arkansas*

- I'd like to put in a word for the underpaid, overworked elementary school teachers who really contributed to my education. I went to a very small school (fewer than 50 students in grades 1-8, with two grades sharing a classroom and a teacher). I had two women teachers in particular who took the time and trouble to give a couple of us special instruction (one in French, the other in writing) when they saw that we were capable of attempting things above the level of the other students. It meant adding to the already heavy burden of teaching two grade levels at once with very few resources. This took a kind of dedication and generosity that

has continued to inspire me in my dealing with my own students.

*Conrad Shumaker, University of Central Arkansas*

- Just like many of my colleagues, I have had many female role models and mentors throughout my life. The most influential would have to be my high school AP American History teacher. She not only instilled a love of history in me, but she also inspired me to become a teacher. She was passionate about history and loved to share that passion. The most memorable moments were when she would get into character as FDR! I will never forget my last couple of years in high school, as she was working on her PhD and teaching in the high school setting. She would share her doctoral journey with us, and we all celebrated when she graduated. She eventually moved on to teach in the history department at a local university, but we still kept in touch and she always had words of inspiration and encouragement. Whether she realized it or not, she was the one who made me realize that I could eventually earn my PhD (almost there), regardless of where I was in my career. It is never too late to try and reach your goals; you just have to keep pushing forward and listening to those positive voices of inspiration.

*Sunny Styles-Foster, University of Central Arkansas*

- I feel very fortunate to have benefited from the support of incredible female mentors throughout my education and my teaching career. As an undergraduate and graduate student, I had professors that invested in me and challenged me to push myself to be a better teacher to my students. My first principal trusted me as an early career teacher to bring to life a vision for a more PBL-focused literacy curriculum in our middle school and provided the resources and leadership for us to integrate technology in ways that had previously not been attempted in my district. She is still a dear friend and mentor to me today. The same was true when I started teaching high school; I had a principal that invested in her people and inspired greatness in both teachers and students because she led with her heart. I am so grateful for these women and so many others that continue to inspire me to push boundaries and grow in my practice as an educator.

*Jessica Herring, University of Central Arkansas*

- To answer this prompt, I need to mention three women. A couple of powerful women shaped my world as an undergraduate, Irene Puckett and Dr Betty A. Matthews. Mrs Puckett taught me psychology, and Dr Matthews taught me English. Both of them took the time to look past the teenager and love the scholar. They met me at my point of need, wherever they found it. They fed me, made me welcome in their offices, their lives, and their homes, and then they never stopped loving me. No matter whether I was doing my best work or ignoring my lessons, they were always watching over my way, encouraging me on my academic journey, praying for me, believing in me, and helping me find faith in myself and my future. Besides them, my first and finest teacher is, of course, my Mama. She is the one who taught me to pay attention, recognize love, and laugh aloud. Those may be the most important lessons I've mastered in life.

*Kay J. Walter, University of Arkansas at Monticello*

# Newsletter

## Feedback

**The circulation of our newsletter is wide and still growing. The feedback we get in response to it is overwhelmingly positive. We currently have readers throughout Arkansas, across the nation, and around the world. Here are some of the offline comments we have received in response to the latest issue:**

- ◆ In the Ruskin article, I liked your recognition that we are not first generation learners — so much to learn from our ancestors! **Sheffield, England**
- ◆ The English Pub is dear to my heart! **Sheffield, England**
- ◆ I enjoyed the Ruskin article. **Paragould, Arkansas**
- ◆ It was nice to read your newsletter and see all the activities you have your students involved with. Having them speak at professional conferences is such a good developmental tool! **St Louis, Missouri**



- ◆ I enjoyed the newsletter—lots of interesting content. It was sweet to see Uncle Jim’s picture, as well as seeing my cousin “at work.” The award is very nice. **Denver, Colorado**
- ◆ Newsletter looks great as always. **Jonesboro, Arkansas**
- ◆ This Newsletter looks great. **Lacey, Arkansas**
- ◆ This is great – thank you for sharing! **Monticello, Arkansas**

- ◆ Thank you! There are so many good pieces in this newsletter. **Monticello, Arkansas**
- ◆ Looks great, guys. Excellent job, Dr. Walter and Ana! You two knocked it out of the ballpark. **Warren, Arkansas**
- ◆ This is so impressive! And I see you got an award for it – congratulations! **Conway, Arkansas**
- ◆ I am glad that I can be a part of something wonderful! Wonderful news! Thank you for all of your hard work. **Jonesboro, Arkansas**
- ◆ You always have a lot of substance in these! **Monticello, Arkansas**
- ◆ Great job! Congratulations on making Top Eight. *The English Pub*: Gee, I wonder who thought that title up. Clever! **Aiken, North Carolina**
- ◆ Great job! **Conway, Arkansas**
- ◆ I was happy to see this newsletter--many thanks for it! **Portland, Oregon**
- ◆ I really love that you include information about upcoming conferences and calls for papers in this newsletter. There are so many events that I hadn't heard of! My husband is transitioning from teaching history to teaching English here in Arkansas, and I will definitely point him in the direction of your publication. **Hampton, Arkansas**
- ◆ Great job! **El Progreso Yoro, Honduras**
- ◆ This newsletter does a great job of reminding us that we are all life-long learners and that we need to make learning a priority in whatever big or small way we can. Brava! **Nampa, Idaho**
- ◆ So glad to see you working and doing great at UAM with you professors, Ana! The newsletter looks great! **Morelia, Mexico**
- ◆ Thank you for sending us this newsletter you and your professor have been working on. We are happy to hear you are doing great in school! **Seattle, Washington**
- ◆ I enjoyed the articles which sparked thoughts on differentiation. I hear lots of arguments about how much it's actually happening and lots of debate over the practicality of including it in lesson planning. The authenticity of the newsletter articles argues that the efforts reported provoked true differentiation. Always good discussion points! **Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**
- ◆ Congratulations on another interesting, inspiring, and informative newsletter! **Etchingam, England**

# FINDING FAULKNER

by Grover Welch

Newport Special School District—High School

Clocks slay time . . . time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life.

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

In my AP Literature classes, the students are always given the opportunity to analyze and criticize the literature they are reading, but realizing the majesty of the author's vision is a challenge. How can I help them understand the artistry behind the writing? It is important as teachers to present literature in ways that promote deeper thinking and analysis. Understanding the deeper meanings requires students to learn about contexts and how history and environments shape the writers and their works. Because of our geographic location in the American South, studying Southern authors provides unique opportunities for teachers to enrich classroom readings. For example, it is easy to teach students the importance of studying the connections between an author's life and his literary achievements by making the short drive to Oxford, Mississippi and visiting the former home of William Faulkner.

William Faulkner was born in Mississippi in 1897 and spent many years of his youth in Oxford. In 1930, after marrying Estelle Oldham, he purchased a house that was then known as "The Bailey Place." Colonel Robert Sheegog, an Irish immigrant who had come most recently from Tennessee, built the house in the 1840s. When Faulkner bought the home, no one had lived on the property for seven years. A year after buying "The Bailey Place," Faulkner renamed it "Rowan Oak," and he pur-





Seeing the furnishings inside the house helps the literary elements of Faulkner's stories come alive for the students.

chased some of the area surrounding the house, known as "Bailey's Woods." Faulkner and his family would live in the house until his death in 1962. In the early 1930s, Faulkner and Estelle lived at Rowan Oak with Estelle's children from a previous marriage, Malcolm and Victoria. Soon after, Faulkner's daughter with Estelle, Jill, was born.

My AP Literature students read *The Sound and the Fury* for their course this semester. They were intrigued by Faulkner's creativity and wanted to learn more about the setting of the story. Thanks to a grant from the Newport High School

Charitable Foundation, I was able to take them to Rowan Oak to delve deeper into the mind of the writer. Students were fascinated by the author's use of his walls to plot out stories for his novels. They recognized that many of the images from the book were taken from around the author's home in Oxford: "It is so interesting to see the man behind the book," senior Nathan May observed.

"When I look at this I get flashes from the book and I think *I see that in this.*" The book grew from a volume of words on pages into a story that took its shape from the world around them.

My students walked the grounds of the author's home and discussed stylistic elements of his writing. Faulkner famously told students that



Students see the spreading roots of the tree at Rowan Oak as a metaphor for plot lines and family interactions in Yoknapatawpha tales.

“Being ‘a writer’ means being stagnant. The act of writing shows movement, activity, life.” At Rowan Oak students were able to see the elements of the writer's life and the process he used to write. Roaming the grounds and viewing the artifacts in the home opened up the writer's world and showed students how Faulkner embraced family, hunting, horseback riding, and many other interests.

In the home were several items that illustrated the struggles the author had to produce his stories as well. “There were these bottles of whiskey in the displays,” Robert Forrester observed. “He drank a lot and smoked a pipe a lot, but that was what writers did then,” he continued. “I can see how these things impacted his stories, especially the short stories.” Similar imaginative leaps were frequent throughout the day.

The town of Oxford featured many elements which students identified from *The Sound and The Fury*. As we drove by the house that inspired the Compson home in the novel, one student exclaimed, “I can see



Students wander through the house tracing the author's footsteps on the stairs and imagining themselves as the writer's guests.



Young learners are eager to explore the environs of the author, indoors and out, to see the world from his perspective.



Newspaper clippings reveal historical details of the literature they study.





Surrounded by the scenes and settings of Faulkner's life, the author's inspirations grow clear to the readers. Such visions illuminate the message and artistry students work to identify in their readings.

the description and the bones of what he was telling us about." Downtown Oxford provided students with glimpses of a familiar courthouse and town square. These excited similar revelations, and the tale grew clearer in their minds. "It is great to walk the grounds of the garden and the stables and see how such a great writer lived," Brett Bennett said. The students took photos and videos and were extremely interested in the grounds of

the estate, imagining themselves beside Faulkner, "sitting out here with lemonade and writing. It is still as magical as it must have been for him."

These students have reaped the benefits of traveling as part of their educational experience. They have a better understanding of Faulkner's life and writing. At Rowan Oak these students saw firsthand what influenced Faulkner to write such complex and masterful pieces about life in the South--particular life in Mississippi. Although acquiring financial support for trips like these might seem daunting, teachers must continue to find ways to provide their students with opportunities to enrich their reading. Not only have these students benefited academically, but they have made memories that will last forever.



The conversations of the day are full of imaginative connections among the things they are seeing and the book they have read. The students see the work as the human story of a writer and envision their own writing futures.



In a learning experience this productive, the teacher has a right to smile.

# Arkansas Anthology



**Encourage your students to submit their creative work.**

A downloadable copy of the interactive *Arkansas Anthology 2018* is available **here**.

Call for submissions as well as other past issues are available **here**:

For more information contact Aaron Hall about access or submissions.

**ARAnthology@gmail.com**



# AEJ

## **A Learning Journey: Exploring New Paths to Teaching and Learning**

A call for manuscripts and submission guidelines are available here:

<http://arkansas-english-journal.weebly.com/call-for-manuscript-submission.html>

Submit your documents to **ACTELA123@gmail.com**.

*Arkansas English Journal* Volume 4.1 is available online now:

<https://arkansas-english-journal.weebly.com/current-aej-issue.html>

# Honor Flight DFW 39



by

**Dr Kay J. Walter**

**University of Arkansas at Monticello**

<http://www.honorflightdfw.org/>

My love for travel has taken me to many interesting places around the continental USA and through western Europe, but one place I had never seen was our nation's capital. This changed because of my Daddy. My father was a veteran of both World War II and the Korean Conflict. When we heard about Honor Flights, he was eager to sign up. Honor Flights are free of charge to veterans, though their guardians are required to pay a fee to cover their travel expenses. Planeloads of veterans and their carers are flown from each state to visit and reflect at the war memorials in our nation's capital. The Arkansas list of veterans has been on standby for years because there is not sufficient funding to cover the costs of taking the veterans on this journey. World War II veterans are, by now, at least 91 years old, and my Daddy was anxious to make the journey while he was still able to travel safely. This motivated my connection to Honor Flight DFW in Texas.



A group of World War II veterans relaxes together before the long flight home.



James J. Walter (left foreground) makes friends with a fellow Army Air Corps veteran as orientation for the honor flight begins.

Honor Flight DFW is much more active in fundraising, and this organization is determined to enable the journey for all living World War II veterans if possible. They were understanding when they heard about Daddy's advanced age, state of health, and earnest desire to take part. They had an upcoming flight scheduled just after Daddy's 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday, but it was already filled. He was assigned first place on their

waiting list, though, and before long he had a seat reserved among the veterans included in the journey.

Traveling along as his guardian meant I would need to miss several days of teaching school, but my students and I arranged assignments, assistance, and communication alternatives which allowed us to optimize the experience as part of their education. Each of them wrote a letter of gratitude for me to include in Daddy's Mail Call, and some of them wrote to other veterans too. One student and I actually wrote individually to each veteran.

Honor Flight DFW requires guardians to attend Guardian Training, and each veteran is required to attend Orientation and Preflight Briefing the week before the trip. That meant Daddy and I made two twelve-hour round trip drives to Dallas. This was hard for me and even harder for Daddy, but neither of us complained. The invest-



Dr Kay J. Walter (standing in red) and her father enjoy the view from the foot of the Lincoln Memorial steps.

ment earned us the right to take part in this adventure. Fifty-four veterans in blue shirts and a whole host of red-shirted assistants departed from Love Field on September 21, 2018 amid thunderous applause.

We landed to similar recognition and loaded onto two tour buses. Our first stop was the Navy Memorial. All the veterans enjoyed exploring the details, and the professional photographer took picture of our seamen posed by the statues. From there we drove on to see the World War II Memorial. Everyone strolled along the walkway and gathered before the Reflecting Pool for a group portrait. Ten of our veterans were World War II vets, and six of them found a moment together for me to take a picture of the heroes from the Greatest Generation. A bugler came to play taps, and we saluted the flag.



Corporal Walter (right foreground) salutes the flag he proudly served.



Each veteran was presented with a certificate signed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

We walked to the Korean Memorial next and saw the wall etched in images taken from extant photographs. One of our veterans was surprised to find himself pictured in the faces there. Daddy posed with the other Korean War veterans for their group shot before we made our way over to the Vietnam Memorial with its vast stretch of engraved names. The last memorial of the day meant the most to me. I was a teenager during our nation's bicentennial year, and Daddy asked

where I wanted to go for our family vacation. I wanted to see the Lincoln Monument, but Mama preferred to stay in the South. Daddy took us to Gettysburg as a compromise and promised to take me to see Lincoln another time. This day he kept his promise to me. Dinner was a banquet at the hotel which included a Missing Man Ceremony to celebrate veterans who die in combat. Each of our veterans received a Challenge Coin along with a certificate signed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In the morning we visited Arlington Cemetery for the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The incoming guard dragged his heel in a traditional salute to our veterans and passed the tip-toe inspection by his superior. Veterans representing armed service in four wars were selected to lay a ceremonial wreath on behalf of our group, and a member of the guard detail came out to talk with our veterans, explain his duties, and answer questions. We visited the Women's Memorial on the way out and ate our picnic lunch at the Air Force Memorial from which we could see the Pentagon. The bus driver pointed out many landmarks along our route including the Watergate building, the Treasury's Printing Office, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

At the Marine Memorial, our veterans met a large group of uniformed allies from the Brazilian Army who wanted to pose for pictures with our Marines. My Daddy was weary by this time and stayed on the bus here, as did many of our veterans, but we had one more surprise in store before we left DC. The evening held a concert by the Airmen of Note, the premier jazz ensemble of the US Air Force which carries on the tradition of the dance band



The World War II Memorial includes the names of all the states and colonies. Mr Walter poses with his daughter by the Arkansas marker.

founded by Major Glenn Miller when he served in the Army Air Corps. Our veterans who were able danced the time away, and the concluding tune featured a collage of service songs. When the band played “Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder,” Daddy rose to his feet and snapped a brisk salute, chest out and head high.

Back at the airport we were applauded onto our plane. The Mail Call on the way home delivered each veteran a package of letters of gratitude and thank you notes from friends, family, and strangers grateful for his service. Several letters in every packet were from Arkansas. My students and I had written them. There were many smiles and tears as each piece of mail was opened and read. It was a very emotional time. Months later, when I played the video of the trip for my freshman class, even my students shed tears. They were grateful to be part of the celebrations and to see evidence of the power of the words they had written.

We landed to cheers and waving flags and scattered to find our ways home. For 36 hours my Daddy and his 53 companions were saluted, cheered, thanked, and celebrated for willingness to serve a beloved country. In the days to come, my Daddy and I spent much time reflecting on and recalling the experience. I often heard him tell others it was “worth any effort,” and his fondest wish was that the Arkansas Honor Flight would call him to make the journey again.

Three and a half months later, my Daddy died. The memories of our trip to Washington, D.C. are priceless to me now not merely because we shared them but also because for that time everyone we passed honored my Daddy. School children waited patiently in lines to say hello. Families with toddlers and grandparents came to shake hands and thank him for his service. People in uniforms stood at attention and recognized him as the hero he has always been to me.

We live in a time when it is easy to focus on the problems in our nation, to see only our own wishes and best interests as important. Too often we choose division and contention as patterns for our rhetoric. Taking part in Honor Flight DFW reminded me that our country



is greater than our differences. There are people living among us who remember a time when the whole world was at war and volunteered to serve and to sacrifice in order to ensure our freedom and our right to live together in the country we all call home. Being in Washington, D.C. gave me an opportunity to stand in the epicenter of our political maelstrom. The political maneuverings and the legislation were happening in the city around me. In the midst of it all, there were Daddy and I with the other veterans and their assistants, grateful to be Americans.

# NCTE News

## 2019 AFFILIATE LEADERSHIP MEETING

Make plans now to join us in Washington, DC this July for the 2019 Affiliate Leadership Meeting involving affiliate leaders from across the continent, NCTE elected leaders and staff, and invited guests. NCTE will provide partial reimbursement of attendance costs for up to two representatives from each affiliate. More information will be sent out soon to affiliate officers.

**New Mexico  
Council of  
Teachers  
of English**

Spring Writing Retreat  
April 13th, 2019

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**Oregon  
Council of  
Teachers  
of English**

Spring Conference  
April 13th, 2019

### **APPLY NOW TO BECOME AN #NCTEVILLAGE COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR**

You'll act as a host and welcome members at local, affiliate, and national events; make connections between resources and classroom practice; and share what teaching in the classroom is like in 2019. Deadline: March 31, 2019, 8:00 p.m.



# UCA Media & Literacy Conference

The UCA Media and Literacy Conference is a two-day conference at the University of Central Arkansas sponsored by the UCA College of Education, Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts (ACTELA), Arkansas Literacy Association (ALA), and the Arkansas Association of School Librarians (ArASL), a division of the Arkansas Library Association (ArLA)

The 2019 Media and Literacy Conference will focus on current issues in literacy and the use of media to support educators. This year's theme is "**Create, Curate, Collaborate.**" Conference attendees will receive twelve hours of professional development, lunch, and a t-shirt. Conference registration is as follows:

- Two-Day General Admission – \$65.00
- One-Day General Admission – \$45.00
- Two-Day Student Admission – \$35.00
- One-Day Student Admission – \$25.00
- Exhibitor – \$65.00

This year's conference will be held on July 9th and 10th at the UCA College of Education (Mashburn Hall) in Conway, AR.

## [Participant & Exhibitor Registration Form](#)

## **Proposal Submissions**

Proposals are now being accepted for the UCA Media & Literacy Conference! Please keep the conference theme, "**Create, Curate, Collaborate,**" in mind while writing your proposal. Submit your proposal using the form below.

## [Proposal Submission Form](#)

First presenters will receive a free registration to the conference. All other presenters must pay the full registration fee.

Members from ACTELA are taking students to make presentations in Shreveport, Louisiana this month. Watch for a report on their adventures to appear in the next issue of our newsletter.



## 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REGIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARS FORUM

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
MARCH 15, 2019  
ALERT YOUR RESEARCH STUDENTS AND FACULTY!**

Both Graduate and Undergraduate Students from Universities in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas are invited to join LSU Shreveport students in presenting research and/or creative work in:

Arts                      Business                      Education  
Humanities              Natural Sciences          Social Sciences

*ORAL OR POSTER PRESENTATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED*

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Pierre Goovaerts, renowned expert on Medical Geography and Geostatistics. Dr. Goovaerts studies how spatial disease patterns and mortality are correlated to environmental exposure and socio-demographics.

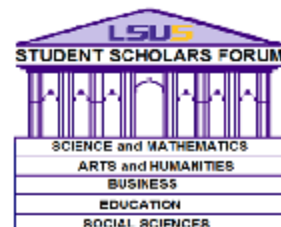
**Date:** Friday, March 15, 2019  
**Time:** 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
**Venue:** LSUS University Center  
No Registration Fees!  
Abstracts due February 18, 2019.

*For More Information, Contact:*  
Dr. Sanjay Menon,  
LSU Shreveport Dean of  
Graduate Studies:  
[sanjay.menon@lsus.edu](mailto:sanjay.menon@lsus.edu)

*Awards for best paper and poster!*

Event website  
[LSUS Student Scholars Forum 2019](#)

Online registration and abstract submission  
[Student Forum Registration](#)



# ANNOUNCEMENTS, AWARDS, NEWS, AND NOTES

- ◆ **Ana Rodriguez-Mesa** has accepted the ACTELA James J. Walter Memorial Student Membership for 2019. Welcome, Ana!
- ◆ **Emily Fluker** has been selected for and accepted the second ACTELA James J. Walter Memorial Student Membership for 2019. Congratulations, Emily!
- ◆ **Dr Kay Walter** presented her paper “What Our Books Reveal” at the Second Annual South Arkansas Literary Festival in El Dorado. See details on page 21.
- ◆ Ana Rodriguez-Mesa presented her paper, “*Jude the Obscure*: Thomas Hardy’s Opened Door,” at the **GSE Conference in Fayetteville**. See details on page 24.
- ◆ The **UAM Edit and Design** class is producing a literary journal, *Weevil Pond Literary Magazine*, this semester. If you are an alumnus of that institution, your creative submissions are invited. Send them to [Weevilpond@gmail.com](mailto:Weevilpond@gmail.com)
- ◆ The Fred J. Taylor Library at UAM is hosting a **Fourth Annual Celebration of Faculty Scholarship and Imagination Day**. Publications by Dr Kay Walter will be on display. Watch for issues of our newsletter to be visible in photos of the event. Look for pictures in the April issue of our newsletter.
- ◆ The A-State Department of Teacher Education, the ERZ, and the Graduate Reading Faculty are hosting a **one-day literacy workshop** for Northeast Arkansas teachers only on July 9th this summer---with Jocelyn Chadwick (immediate NCTE past-president) of Harvard Graduate School of Education and Jonda McNair (current co-editor of the journal *Language Arts*) of Clemson University. Space is limited so watch for an Event Brite link to sign up!



- ◆ ACTELA is applying for the 2019 **Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence Award** from NCTE, so cross your fingers and help us hope for another win!
- ◆ ACTELA is accepting nominations this year for our **Teacher of the Year Award**. Do you know a deserving teacher? Instructions for nominations are available on our website [here](#).
- ◆ The February 2019 issue of *The English Pub* announced the Northeast Arkansas Literacy Conference which took place last summer, but we failed to mention that the **A-State Department of Teacher Education and Office of Diversity** paid the expenses and fees associated with bringing Crystal Allen to speak at the event. Also, the **ERZ** provided the food. Thanks to all of them for generous contributions to this enriching event for Arkansas teachers.
- ◆ **Student members of ACTELA** will take part in the Fourth Annual Regional Student Scholars Forum at LSUS this month. Look for a report on their performances in the April issue of our newsletter.
- ◆ **Dawn Bessee** has recently been promoted to the position of Teacher Center Coordinator for the Crowley's Ridge Education Service Cooperative. The majority of her duties will henceforth revolve around the organization and scheduling of professional development and school support for the 22 school districts in her cooperative region.
- ◆ **Brycial Williams** has been awarded the S.Ed. in reading, and he is currently working toward the specialist in writing. He now teaches first-grade in Wynne, AR.
- ◆ **Ana Rodriguez-Mesa** is serving ACTELA as Editorial Assistant for our newsletter this year.

**Membership cost for  
ACTELA has been  
reduced to \$20.00.**

# Second Annual South Arkansas Literary Festival

El Dorado, 9 March 2019

by

Dr Kay J. Walter

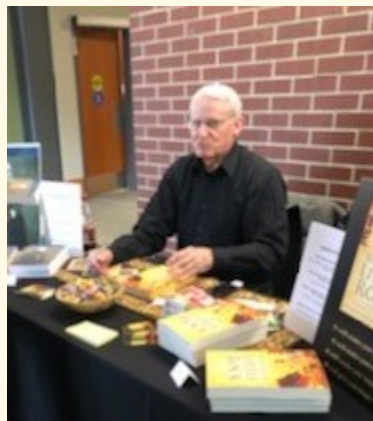
Philip Shackelford and his staff at South Arkansas Community College organized another excellent literary festival this year. Last year's two-day event was cut short when the historic Administration Building was struck by lightning, causing a fire. This year's one-day event occurred during a similar rainstorm, but with less violent results. Vendors, author, scholars, and book lovers enjoyed a day of conversations and presentations on a wide variety of bibliophilic topics. A morning session featured a talk by our newsletter editor, Dr. Kay Walter, on the character revelations authors supply through the reading habits of the people in their fictive worlds. The event was an enriching experience for local students and their teachers as well as a wider group of community members. The following pages offer photos and responses from people in attendance as a glimpse into the occasion for those who missed it.

- ◆ I really appreciate the hard work by Philip and his staff to organize and put on this event. El Dorado is establishing itself as a regional center for the arts, and this festival fits in well with the city's renaissance. I'm looking forward to seeing the festival's continuing growth and success.

*Dan Boice*



The vendor hallway was a bustling site throughout the day with authors and readers to meet and conversations to enjoy.



Self published author, Dr George Rollie Adams, autographed copies of his book, *South of Little Rock*.



Novelist Cecilia Wilson, author of *Back to Bremen*, was the festival's keynote speaker.

- ◆ I had nothing but positive experiences at the Literary Festival. For someone like me, who missed the first annual South Arkansas Literary Festival last year, it was wonderful. I was looking forward to this year's event, and it did not disappoint. I had a few favorite moments; one of them was hearing Dr Walter speak. The subject matter of her presentation, "What our Books Reveal," was intriguing. Now I feel like every time I read a book, I am challenged to use my own judgment to decide how those characters reveal themselves to me personally. I started my day that Saturday, March 9, 2019, thinking it would be a long working day. However, I was having so much fun meeting other book lovers and exchanging ideas that by the end of the day, I did not feel like I was working at all! I am already excited for the Third Annual South Arkansas Literary Festival, and I hope to see everyone there. *Susan Bailey*
- ◆ I enjoyed the Literacy Festival in El Dorado this year. The sessions had relevance to everyday people, and the presenters were very well informed. While I was only participating as a spectator, I was very engaged in the events of the day. I particularly connected to a few speakers. One was Al-



Dr Kay Walter presented her paper,  
"What Our Books Reveal."



The welcome table was full of local  
information for participants to enjoy.

lie Stevens who told us about books that teens find fascinating. She was very in tune with what was available, and she told us she had read every book she described. Dr. Kay Walter spoke of growing up and being encouraged to read in the warmth of her family's values. Dr. George Rollie Adams spoke in depth about his journey in self-publishing and the novel writing process. All in all, I thought the efforts were fascinating, and I was glad to be able to take part. Commendable work from all! *Constance Burch*

- ◆ The SouthArk Literary Festival is a great addition to the cultural events happening in El Dorado and all of South Arkansas. All of the authors, vendors, and participants had a great time, and the planning committee is already thinking of ways to grow and improve the festival for 2020! We at the Calhoun County Library were thrilled to be a part of this great event. *Allie Stevens*

- ◆ The South Arkansas Literary Festival is the only event of its kind in our area. We are blessed to be able to offer this event to our college and our community for free. One of South Arkansas Community College's strategic objectives is to serve as a recognized resource for cultural enrichment, and this festival is a compelling demonstration of our dedication to that initiative, not only for our community but also for our students and employees. As an academic library, this festival really is a great thing to be a part of



Dr Kay Walter has been making notes during a presentation about YA books of interest.

since it dovetails so nicely with our responsibility to promote information literacy, academic success, cultural enrichment, and learning. Student engagement and faculty engagement are very important to us, and a number of our faculty and staff participated as speakers in the festival. Not only is this an opportunity for those individuals to present on their own work or aspects of their professional lives, but it is also a valuable opportunity for our students to see their faculty and other college staff outside the classroom, exploring topics that are important to them and valuable for academic success and personal enrichment. *Phillip Shackelford*

# Graduate Students in English Conference

Fayetteville, 9 March 2019

Sharon Fox and the graduate students in English at University of Arkansas hosted an interdisciplinary conference which gathered graduate students from around the campus and the region to share ideas and open discussion on topics they see as difficult conversations. As usual, select upper classmen from among undergraduate programs who are supported by faculty mentors were invited to take part as well. Because of the South Arkansas Literary Festival (see page 21), Dr Walter was unable to chaperone her students to this event. Students from Monticello were supported only by proxy this year, and the following pages provide their responses and comments by conference organizers on their excellent participation in the event.



Undergraduate conference presenters represent the graduate students of the future: (left to right) Ana Rodriguez-Mesa, Jomarea Beal, Kristina Kinney, Jeff Whitson, and Braden Taylor.



For the third year in a row, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville invited our undergraduate students to attend their annual [Graduate Students in English](#) Conference. Even though this conference is intended for graduate students in English programs around the U.S., Sharon Fox and her colleagues continuously give our undergraduate English students at UAM the opportunity to present their academic papers alongside “the big kids.” They receive our students with an enthusiasm that results in our students’ willingness to go back year after year. The graduate students at Fayetteville recognize the benefits our undergraduate students receive through the experience of attending these conferences: they make connections with scholars around Arkansas and beyond, they take away important academic knowledge from other presenters, and they gain the experience needed to succeed in graduate school or in the work field. This year was slightly different from past years; for the first time since the first GSE Conference, Dr. Walter was unable to accompany her students. As a senior, I’ve had my fair share of conference presentations. I have attended the GSE Conference since 2017. Since I was already attending, Dr. Walter suggested that I travel with her students in her place. Out of the four students going, only one had ever presented at a conference before. It was my job to drive them to Fayetteville, to moderate their session, and to act as a guide and cheerleader. This was a new experience for me, but it was exciting to take a leadership role this year. The theme of this year’s conference was “Opening Doors: Creating Opportunities for Difficult Conversations.” All of Dr. Walter’s students focused on the difficult conversations that canonical British literature has initiated over the years. In my own presentation, I talked about Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* and the conversations he started through this novel. Despite their nervousness, the students did an outstanding job. They were asked hard questions about their essays which they answered confidently. For lunch they served us sandwiches, and Dr. Lisa Hinrichsen, the director of the English program’s graduate admissions, gave a presentation about graduate school; we learned helpful information about U of A’s masters and Ph.D. programs in English. After lunch, we made the traditional trip to [Dickson Street Bookshop](#). Students love to browse the aisles and go home with bags full of books. This year’s trip to Fayetteville was the most memorable. As a senior, it meant a lot to me to have the chance to lead my peers through their first conference presentations. We all had a wonderful time in Fayetteville. Ana Rodriguez-Mesa, University of Arkansas at Monticello



- I was able to attend the panel presentation that Ana moderated. Ana did a wonderful job, and the four presenters also were excellent! I liked their topics, and the connections among the talks (and to the overall conference theme) was clear. Very professional deliveries all around! They were asked questions and offered strong responses. I hope [ACTELA] will send more students next year and [that you] are able to join us, as well.

Leigh Pryor Sparks, Assistant Director of MA and PhD Programs in English

- Let me add that your students seemed to greatly enjoy the talk that Leigh and I gave on graduate school. I was impressed by all of them, and I hope to see applications from them in the future. We are happy to Skype, email, or talk on the phone with them more about our application process, programs, and other opportunities here. And, of course, we hope to continue this collaboration in coming years!

Dr Lisa Hinrichsen, Director of Graduate Studies in English

- I am glad your students enjoyed being a part of the conference. I was not able to be in their talks because I was manning the front desk, but I did get to talk with many of them between sessions and I was impressed. I am so glad you have encouraged your students to stretch themselves. I would have appreciated this opportunity as an undergraduate and have started encouraging the undergraduates I interact with.

Sharon Fox, GSE Conference Program Chair

- I am, indeed, very proud of students like you, and I very much appreciate Dr. Walter's efforts to provide UAM students with valuable scholarly opportunities such as the conference in Fayetteville.

Mark Spencer, Dean, Arts and Humanities, UAM



Ana Rodriguez-Mesa (left) serves as moderator for the undergraduate panel of flash presentations about difficult conversations initiated by the study of canonical British literature.

- Our trip to the GSE conference at the University of Arkansas was centered around the topic of “Opening the Door to Difficult Conversations.” Almost all of the presentations had interesting arguments that highlighted the issues of sexuality, poverty, extreme nationalism, and much more. Our panel discussed many different topics including the difficulty of forgiveness, the cost of education, and gender roles. The conference was a perfect way to display our research and practice our presentation skills. The conference also had a great presentation that highlighted important information regarding the admissions process to grad school. I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend this conference.

Jeff Whitson

- The Fayetteville conference was a great educational experience. The papers I heard were very fascinating, and I liked how everyone was given time to comment or ask questions. I particularly liked how involved everyone was and the interactions between presenter and audience. Everyone who attended was pleasant. [Dickson Street Bookshop](#) was amazing, and I would love to spend a whole day there. There were so many books, new and old, to look at, and it had a great atmosphere. Overall, I really enjoyed the trip to Fayetteville, presenting at the conference, and visiting the bookstore.

Kristina Kinney

- Going to Fayetteville was one of the peaks of my sophomore year. Getting the opportunity not only to work with but also to present with other scholars who are in the same field as myself was very rewarding. After our presentations we were happy to visit the [Dickson Street Bookshop](#) and grab a few books on our way out. Overall the day was fun and full of new experiences; I hope to be invited back next year and spend time with new and old friends.

Braden Taylor

- The conference trip to Fayetteville was a wonderful experience! I did not present at this conference, but watching my peers present their work made me really excited to present mine later in the semester. The presentations were fun to watch, but the whole experience was what really stuck with me. Braden and I enjoyed our trip so much that we went back to Fayetteville for spring break. I enjoyed the information about graduate school and other scholars’ presentations, but watching Braden, Ana, Jeff, Jomarea, and Kristina present made the whole trip just fantastic!

Emily Jackson

- Going to Fayetteville was an experience to remember. I attended with talented scholars and had a chance to meet important people. I felt like I belonged with the group of graduates students that also presented at the conference even though I am an undergraduate. The conference was very successful and I received valuable information about attending the graduate program at Fayetteville. I enjoyed my time there, and I would love to present again.

Jomarea Beal

# Global Perspective

**The global view this month is provided anonymously by a recent graduate of an Arkansas university. He aspires to teach English in an Arkansas public school, but his way forward is still unclear. Students like him are studying and learning in our classes every day and graduating from our schools each spring. The time has come to hear their voices. Whatever our political views on immigration and its reforms, we must recognize their presence among us and find ways to optimize their learning to become the best teachers we can be.**

My story begins like many others; I was brought to the U.S. at a young age by parents who desperately wanted to provide me with a better life. I was five years old and an only child when we entered the States. When people ask me what I remember about living in Mexico, I tell them my memories are vague and hazy. Most of the memories I have revolve around my grandmother. I remember spending nights at her house. I remember watching her cook, and I remember the many times my cousins and I gathered there to play. At five, I had no idea that my life was changing. My mother says that on the day we left our home, my grandmother accompanied us as far as she could. I was so attached to her that I didn't want to go on a trip without her. I fell asleep somewhere along the way and when I woke up, my grandmother was no longer with us. The most vivid memory that remains with me about that day is the overwhelming sadness I felt being separated from my grandmother. I had no idea that I would not see her again for ten years.

When we arrived in the States, my parents had no money and spoke



no English. We had no home and no car. All we had was each other and the clothes on our backs. My father has always been a hard worker and has always done his best to take care of us; it did not take long for him to find a job and a home for us. We ended up in Arkansas where we have lived for over twenty years.

My parents say it took me a matter of months to learn English. It was hard at first. I remember not knowing how to tell my teacher that I needed to go to the bathroom. This resulted in lots of tears from me and occasional “accidents.” One time, I got in trouble because another student taught me how to say a word that I wasn’t supposed to say at school. It’s fair to say that the reason I learned English so quickly is because I had to. I didn’t do it alone, however. The school I attended played a huge role in my education. I was placed in classes for the underdeveloped, and I had two mentors who worked with me quite a bit. One I visited every day in the little corner classroom that was separate from the rest of the building; the other one visited me once a week at school. These two teachers taught me how to read and write. These educators had such an impression on me that by the time I got to second grade, I had decided I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. This conviction has stayed with me. Even today, I am hoping to eventually become an educator.

Dreamers is what they call people like me. We have big dreams. We want to be lawyers, doctors, teachers, soldiers, scientists, but most of all we want to make our families proud. I was the first in my family to graduate from high school. I was the first in my family to graduate with a college degree. For



many of us, the road to achieving our dreams has been rocky and difficult. In 2012, President Barack Obama passed an immigration policy called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also known as DACA. This legislative move was a lifeline for many of us. We were given a chance to work legally and to pursue our educational goals without fear of persecution, but DACAmented students are not eligible to receive federal or state financial aid.

We cannot receive Pell Grants and many of us are even unable to receive student loans. The only true type of financial assistance most of us receive are private scholarships. Private scholarships are hard to find and most of them are not enough to cover the full cost of tuition. What's more, in the state of Arkansas, DACAmented students are required to pay out-of-state tuition and fees. The odds are stacked heavily against those of us who come from low-income families. Nevertheless, we keep dreaming and we fight tooth and nail to achieve our goals. Thanks to DACA, many of us can have full-time jobs which gives us a way to pay for our education. I held a full-time job from the time I started college while I was a full-time student. My family also financially supported my educational endeavor. Even though we did not have a real Christmas for four years, and my parents had to work twice as hard, they both looked forward to seeing me receive my diploma. To many of us and our families, this is a struggle worth struggling through.





When people ask me where I come from, I find myself lost for words. I come from Mexico, but I was raised in the U.S. and have lived here for most of my life. Although my parents have passed on their culture to me and my siblings, I can honestly say I have no idea what everyday life is like in Mexico. I grew up watching Sesame Street and Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. I

grew up reading Dr. Seuss books, *Little House on the Prairie*, and *Harry Potter*. I grew up listening to American music and wearing American clothes. I grew up learning American customs and social codes. The place I was born in is not the place that has molded me into the person I am today. This identity crisis plagues others like me as well. We love and respect this country that we call home, but many times we feel unwanted and even hated. Many of us feel like we have no home.

As the political prospect changes, our lives are shadowed with uncertainty and fear. One decision, one law can change our entire lives forever. It's hard to imagine being close to fulfilling a dream and knowing that at any moment it could all disappear. Our lives truly depend on the decisions that others make for us. Despite these difficulties, many students work hard every day, and we continue to fight for our dreams. Many dreamers contribute immensely to their communities and are proud to do so. Many students, like myself, have had mentors and educators who fully supported us and believed in us and worked diligently to help us as much as they could. Understanding the life of a DACAmented student cannot be accomplished by a Google search or reading a news article; getting to know someone who is DACAmented reveals much more about who we are than what politicians or the media might say about us. People could realize how much we all have in common. When it boils down to it, we are all human beings trying to make our way through this crazy venture called life.

**Questions for our author may be directed to the newsletter editor.**

# Developing Connections



Allie Stevens, Director of [Calhoun County Library](#), shares a link to her blog. This slide show offers reading recommendations for every child based on their interests. Allie has read all these books and is willing to respond to questions about them.

<http://www.calcolibrary.com/SouthArkLitFest/>



Literacy and NTCE is the official blog of the National Council of Teachers in English

<http://blog.ncte.org//>

The next issue of our newsletter will cover diverse religious observations. Do you have ideas about how to handle religious diversity in your classrooms? Do you have stories of when a need for inclusivity has arisen? Send them to our [newsletter editor](#), and we can all learn from one another.

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Do you know teachers who should be nominated for our Teacher of the Year Award? Submit your pitch on their behalf [here](#). Be sure to include details and to highlight administrative support.