

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:

Good teachers can find inspiration in remarkable places, and they never stop developing their abilities. What did you encounter over the summer that motivates you to grow and become a better teacher?

Their answers begin on page three. 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,

We hope that you are having a wonderful start to the new school year! Personally, I always love the beginning of a new school year or semester, as it gives me the opportunity to improve my practices and introduce new elements into the courses I teach.

Those of you in the K-12 classroom are aware that the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.) is in full swing in the state of Arkansas. For teachers all across the state, this initiative will be a challenge, but it will ultimately lead to improved literacy skills and attention to literacy skills within all content areas.

As an instructor for pre-service teachers in a disciplinary literacy course, I



have witnessed how eye opening the new initiative has been for our candidates. As English/Language Arts teachers, we can take the lead and not only improve practices within our own classrooms but also consider reaching out to our content area colleagues to assist them with support and strategies that we know are effective.

While we are still in the early phases of the implementation of R.I.S.E., it is exciting to think about the results that will surface in the years to come. Literacy is the backbone of a strong education and YOU are at the forefront of moving our state forward. Have a great school year and thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely yours,
Sunny Styles-Foster

Let's Keep in Touch!

Visit our website: www.actela.weebly.com
and LIKE our newsletter!

Email our editor: walter@uamont.edu

or Friend us on Facebook:

Arkansas Council of Teachers of
English Language Arts



Editorial Note

by Dr Kay J. Walter

With this issue of the newsletter, ACTELA moves into a new phase. Shortly after our April 2019 publication, I embedded a map to clarify the vision of our readership. Since then, we have had nearly a thousand visits to our newsletter webpage. Readers have come from throughout Arkansas, from thirty-four other states in our nation, and from eighteen other countries. Some of these readers have returned multiple times, though we have not produced a new issue until now. As recently as the first week of September, we've had entirely new visitors from Plymouth, UK, Tianjin, China, and Pittsburgh, PA. Even as I write I see we have recorded our first reader from Russia today. I hope all our readers return to see this new issue and continue to be interested in literacy efforts in Arkansas.

This month we have some new contributors to introduce. Allie Stevens, a librarian from the southern part of our state, provides the reading recommendation for a YA novel she has been promising us. Several of our board members report on their summer travels. Grover Welch gives us the latest in a series of field-tested best practice from his own classroom. We even have exciting announcements from other ACTELA publications.

Once again we are off to a champion start as we demonstrate how richly our newsletter deserves the national recognition it receives. For the third consecutive year, we will claim the Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence Award at the NCTE Annual Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. Our publication was one of only two in the competition to earn a perfect score on the judging rubric this year. The announcement letter is included on page eighteen, for those interested in the details.

Whatever interests you about this newsletter, whatever reason encourages you to read it, please let us know. If there is a topic you'd like us to explore or an event you'd like us to advertise or visit, write to us. This newsletter is meant to provide literacy enthusiasts in Arkansas and around the world with information about our ideas and happenings.

All of us, teachers, students, librarians, actors, readers, writers, and community supporters can contribute to what makes this an award-winning venture. Please write soon. We'll be waiting to hear from you!

walter@uamont.edu



- ⇒ This summer I had the opportunity to attend the NCTE affiliate meeting with Sunny Styles-Foster as a representative of ACTELA. Connecting with leadership from other NCTE affiliates motivated me to serve as a strong advocate for students and teachers across our state in my role as an ACTELA board member. Part of being an educator is continuing to work as a passionate advocate for education and literacy. This experience is helping me to focus my work as we begin a new fall semester. **Jessica Herring Watson**
- ⇒ As simple as it may sound, I began to follow various authors and educators on Twitter this summer. It started as a way to stay "in-the-know" about the latest YA novels and middle school books, but it turned into a "falling down the rabbit hole" experience. I read thread after thread that would lead me from a great book talk to a great teaching idea to questions and answers about best practices in the classroom. I feel like it has helped me keep pace with the most current topics--those couple hundred characters have yielded tiny nuggets of inspiration and creativity that have fed my hungry soul all summer long. *Dawn Bessee*
- ⇒ I find inspiration in travel. This summer I made my first journey to Eastern Europe. I visited Prague, Czech Republic. It felt very odd to be in a place which was, in my childhood, "behind the Iron Curtain." I explored an American school, talked with an Irish immigrant studying the Czech language, participated in a writers' collective, toured a medieval library, and walked the streets of an ancient walled city unconquered by Rome. It was a fascinating and enriching experience. I will provide a detailed description of my

journey in an upcoming issue of our newsletter. Stay tuned!

Dr Kay J. Walter

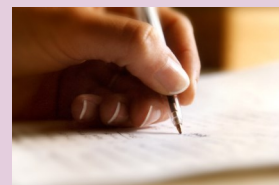
⇒ This summer, I had the opportunity to experience a taste of what it is like to be a teacher. At the Boys and Girls Club of Saline County Riverside, I was the teacher in the Learning Center for the teens (which are a group of 5th-12th graders). I taught STEM classes and life skills classes. I even got to help a representative from UALR teach a nutrition class. All the while, I learned things about this age group that are very unique to their ages, like when I had a conversation with a kid about income and free lunches, or the time I had to calm a child down because he couldn't fold a paper airplane just the way he wanted, or when I had a group of kids come to my room every day who always seemed interested, even when I knew they thought the material was boring. I'm sure to some of you these may seem like basic stories from every teaching, but this summer was the first time I had the opportunity to experience anything even close to being a real teacher, and it gave me a lot to think about while I continue to train for my teaching career.

Emily Jackson

⇒ Each summer seems to go by more quickly than the last; this summer went by even faster for me as it began by my packing up one classroom and moving on to the next. Changing schools, even districts, can be very challenging and exhausting but also exciting and rewarding. In this new change, I found myself preparing for two courses I've never taught in my previous 15 years in the classroom: AP Literature and Composition as well as Creative Writing. Not only did I attend AP Institute where I found inspiration among novice and experienced teachers alike who generously shared ideas and concerns of the upcoming year, but I also found myself journaling again for the first time in a long time, a skill and practice I had put aside in order to take time for all the demands of life. I've never felt more inspired and supported as I was this summer in preparing these new courses for my new students in a new district. Here's to new beginnings! *Mindy Lynn*

⇒ As a teacher who splits time being an administrator, I often don't have time to keep up with all the books I want to read. This summer I managed a 4-day-long weekend to the Texas coast, and I read a book! It was wonderful. My take-away, being a better teacher means finding space to take care of myself.

Donna Wake





The Servant Heart

by Grover Welch

Newport Special School District—High School

He who is not a good servant will not be a good master.

—Plato

The altercation started simply, with a look, a smirk, and a mumble. Teaching is a series of interactions and this one in my fourth year of teaching followed a year of tough decisions in this classroom. I had begun the year facing severe depression brought on by my own PTSD. This left my class inadequately disciplined in the first semester, and through neglect I had nurtured many bad attitudes and behaviors. Returning from Christmas break I had reset my classroom management, ready to follow through on the practices I already knew worked and acknowledging the long semester ahead, undoing what I had done. A saying my friend and teacher Jarod is fond of kept playing in my mind: It takes seven times longer to unlearn something if learned incorrectly the first time.

I had fought through to early May with reiterating procedures and trying to tackle gaps in curriculum I had missed. Now, here in front of me was a student. He was one of my hardest, not violent, but always ready to challenge authority. He stood in his ragged hoodie and called me out in front of the whole class over my own handwriting on the board, a series of notes I had hastily written over the past thirty minutes of class reflected the lack of care I had put into the preparation.

In my teaching career, I have made many mistakes, but when this student turned to his friend and mumbled something just under his breath, I seethed with anger. I immediately demanded to know what he had said and after a quick back and forth he blurted it out. “How am I supposed to learn anything? I can’t even read what any of



that says, and you want us to take notes!”

My temper seized me, and I immediately demanded the student go to the hall. He stood defiantly and strolled victoriously from my room. I took several minutes to finish my lesson, eyes of other students judging my writing and my response. I walked to the door as the bell rang and invited him to step back inside until the other students had left.

At this point I had calmed, but only slightly. I turned to him in a self-righteous, teacher fueled tirade. I wrote the student up for insubordination and sent him home as angry as I had been. We finished the week, and that weekend I broke down in a way that can only be called humiliating. I knew I had misbehaved. I doubted my own efficacy as a teacher, and I knew my own behavior was abhorrent. What was I going to do?

I am a practical kind of person. I believe that all situations can be solved with the right amount of study and listening, so I turned to those around me. I sought wisdom from better teachers, guidance from those who had gone before. I immediately asked my friends for advice. It came abundantly and concisely. I had to reset that relationship again.



It is essential that teachers lift and nurture each other in guiding, forgiving, and sometimes explicit modeling. I have seen many teachers flounder and leave the profession and know how hard it is. It is the hardest job I have ever had because of the relationships we build.

In a presentation at the Crowley’s Ridge Educational Cooperative, Kelly Gallagher told teachers, “We build students, like cars, like houses. We build them to contain essential truths and knowledge, but unlike everything else, we build them with love, kindness, and care.” We build teachers in the same way, and I found in those around me the advice I needed to build myself.

Service is the constant pull of care and nurturing teachers. I like to tell people we have “Servant Hearts.” This is reflected to me every day I walk the halls and interact with other teachers. We work in an environment where we need to maintain the relationships with each teacher just as we maintain relationships with our students.

When I returned to the classroom, I apologized to the class and especially to that student. He had a surprised look on his face and responded with a simple acknowledgment that he was wrong as well. From then on, that student has come to me for everything, advice, help to apply for college, and to share his successes. Acknowledging the responsibility of the Servant Heart helped us all grow.

Building Rapport with Online Students

by Kathryn Broyles

American Public University System

Building relationships online? Perhaps shallow, or fleeting, exploitative, or inconsequential, but real? Certainly not real!

Au contraire, mon amie, c'est vrai—one can indeed not only develop relationships with students in a way that is encouraging, meaningful, and appropriately professorial, but ones that can span time, space, and age in ways that brick-and-mortar relationships might not. No judging by looks, or voice timbre, gender or age in an online context—at least not at first, and not ever depending on how the institution builds out “presence” and depending upon how much professors are required or choose to conceal or reveal themselves as approachable, relevant, credible, and of course, audible and visible.

So, what do I, as that odd creature, a full-time online faculty member, do? How do I build relationships with students? Honestly? I have no idea! In “real life” I am an effective teacher and in “real classrooms” in the virtual world, I am a good teacher too. Why? For all the same reasons one is ever a good teacher. I care. I’m educated—an expert in my field. I work hard. I know the course and the students in it, and I “occupy,” as a way of being, the recommended best practices for online engagement as well as the recommended best practices for simply being an engaging and competent mentor and instructor. I just keep striving to be wholly, authentically me in a way which communicates that I’m competent and I care.

Am I brilliant? Hardly. Am I the best? I doubt it. Am I successful? I’m sure of it. I frequently have students who write me unbidden and unofficially to tell me so. Of course, as we all do, I have students who write and say I’m horrid—but often they can’t spell my name, remember which course they had me for, or complain about not me but something in the course or the material I actually had no control over but for which they held me responsible. Why should we discuss euthanasia in an intro to ethics course, after all? Or why should I take off points for grammar and clarity in a formal paper? These are the things that annoy some students, but these are the students that need these things in their lives if they’re going to thrive—so I try not to let their aggravation sway me too much. Instead, I work hard to name the practical, tangible, useful ways the course materials open up new realms to consider in real life and in one’s real relationships. Can thinking about euthanasia in this

course prepare me for caring for my aging mother in ten year's time? Or better enable me to have that conversation about "The kids" or "The will" with my wife even though I'm only 40 because my best friend just died suddenly in an accident? My answer is a resounding YES! Yes, education matters. Yes, new ideas enable you to spot and consider other new ideas. Yes! A different perspective may yield a different answer or a different result. Yes! It's worth your time and it will open up new avenues of job success or personal fulfillment! How? That's up to you, dear student!

This is the conversation we must all have with all students if our teaching is to matter, and so it's the same conversation I have with students whether I meet them in a classroom small group, after hours at the library for a group report, or in Adobe Connect to go over the details of a forthcoming assignment. Caring, Committing, Communicating, Commiserating, Questioning, and Cajoling—These are the fundamentals of building credibility and trust and motivation in "real" students and they are the same fundamentals for building such things in "real students" via an LMS reaching you from the WWW.

How does one build relationships with online students? By working hard to translate all the things that make one uniquely able to be present in the real world, able to "show up" for students despite, through, or thanks to new media. I can't dress to impress, nor convey savvy, humor, or a wicked dry wit with the perfect logo tee, to-die-for shoes, or properly sourced clothing. But I can teach in my PJs. Both wardrobe choices make me feel comfortable, ready, undistracted in their appropriate venue. But in both cases, I'm me, or rather I'm able to convey me in the ways I want to convey me. No, it's not the same. I'm not making light of the difference. But I am making light of the criticism that assumes it can't be done. It can be done, and it matters that it be done because with fewer students able to excel in college, fewer of them willing to take on the debt of the degree, and more communities facing more uncertainty, what I support through education is a future with potential, an advocacy for responsibility, community, and the thriving individual. Access to these things cannot always be accomplished if physical barriers exist. Far, far fewer arbitrary barriers should exist in either realm, but at least in the virtual realm the barriers all center around skills that enable and support learning—barriers that can be studied for, met, and disassembled. The deepest and most meaningful of online course experiences can be had in a virtual classroom. The key is to "really" show up.



Kathryn Broyles, Online Instructor

I Wish / I Hope

by Dr Kay J. Walter

University of Arkansas at Monticello

My work as a university instructor of Freshman Composition enables me to interact with public school teachers eager to help their students make a successful transition to college life. Scholars are never more at risk of failure than in their first faltering footsteps into adulthood. They enter universities as teenagers still growing frontal lobes and decision-making skills. They venture away from home unsure, a bit homesick, surrounded by new people and new expectations.

They grow quickly, establish themselves as productive learners, and develop the survival skills they need to launch their careers as they go along. The between time is an anxious phase for them, for their families, for their teachers, and for all who have contributed to developing young men and women of independent potential from what were once irresistible children in need of constant attention.

Secondary English teachers, understandably eager to enhance student success, often ask me, “What do you want them to know before they come to you?” I have spent many years considering what lessons and skills are presupposed by my classroom instruction. It is not as simple, of course, as a list of titles or authors that might be introduced in advance to guarantee success in college English. If so, we might pass out a reading list and skip straight to upper level course work.

Part of the challenge is simply maturation, which takes time and cannot happen at once or on schedule. Growth takes some struggle. Nevertheless, there are some foundational ideas that I believe can benefit all students, lessons which could be introduced and reinforced before the challenges of post-secondary study begins. I made a list of things I believe every student would benefit from learning before enrollment in a university. Mastery may not ensure perfect marks in freshman English, but I believe these things will behoove the effort. For a list of my ideas, see page ten.

Many of these lessons are taught from the youngest years and must be

Here is a list of things I wish students knew to prepare them for my college composition classrooms:

- How to read and follow multi-step directions
- How to envision connections among things or ideas not obviously related
- How to slow down and focus on literary reading, noticing unfamiliar words
- How to see words in pieces which help with guessing their meaning and to accumulate a vocabulary
- How to demonstrate actively the behaviors which indicate engagement with learning
- How to craft a working overt thesis statement which includes a parallel series
- How to exert self-discipline over body language which shouts in the classroom
- How to contribute actively in class to maximize educational opportunities for all students
- How to prepare for instruction before class begins
- How to work without complaining when attempting unfamiliar tasks
- How to articulate specific points of confusion
- How to ask for help unabashedly

In addition, I wish they knew these things about writing:

- How to speak in the third person without relying upon “one” as a pronoun
- How to simplify ideas by eliminating clutter in writing
- How to begin a paper without announcing intention “In the following paper, I will argue. . . .”
- How to summarize without saying “As mentioned above” or a similar phrase
- How to make a transition subtly without employing counting terms such as “first,” “next,” “finally”
- How to supply helpful feedback in peer editing rather than just encouragement “looks good to me”
- How to consider feedback without adopting it thoughtlessly
- How much time an effective writing process really takes and the importance of pausing to reset before a last proofreading
- How revision differs from editing
- How rewriting is more than correcting
- How to decode and use proofreaders’ marks
- How to capitalize in titles properly

What do you wish your students knew? Write our newsletter editor and share your own ideas walter@uamont.edu.

reinforced through repetition. Summer vacation is a great compromiser of skills learned. Many students who know perfectly well in May have forgotten before September. I am aware that when students tell me they have never heard of “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” this doesn’t necessarily mean that their teachers eliminated Alfred, Lord Tennyson from the curriculum. It may only mean they have had busy and exciting lives since the Tennyson lesson. Certainly, they know the idea that it is “better to have loved and lost” by the same poet.

Understanding the difficulty of retaining knowledge, especially when undergoing major growth, I determined this year to assist in the transition of knowledge directly. I asked ELA teachers of my ERZ to tell me “What do you hope your students will remember in their college English classes?” I got some interesting and useful ideas in response, including these suggestions by Kayla Bryant from McGehee and Jill Brown from Monticello:

- the importance of supporting their claims with solid evidence to provide themselves and their work with the proper credibility
- to always proofread and have peers read and offer constructive feedback
- to look at literature from multiple perspectives so as to get the most out of whatever they're reading
- to push themselves to read and expose themselves to literature outside of their comfort zones
- the research process
- annotating and close reading/rhetorical appeals
- synthesis of sources

I was able to rehearse this material with my students quickly, reminding them that they had learned these lessons and that I expected them to know and practice the skills in our class. It saved class time to be able to expect general understanding. It was easy to introduce new vocabulary and expressions as relevant to familiar knowledge. The students saw themselves as already armed for the battle. They were reassured and encouraged to find the training they had already received would be directly useful to them and anticipated their own success. From there, we were able to move forward rapidly.

My students and I are off to a great start for the semester. This part of aligning our instruction vertically can enhance student success at every level of literacy education. If you have other specific ideas for what students should remember in college classrooms, please send them my way so I can remind our students of what we trust them to know.

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

welcomes a new editor,

Dawn Bessee. Dawn will be



building upon the groundbreaking work of the former editor, Janine Chitty.

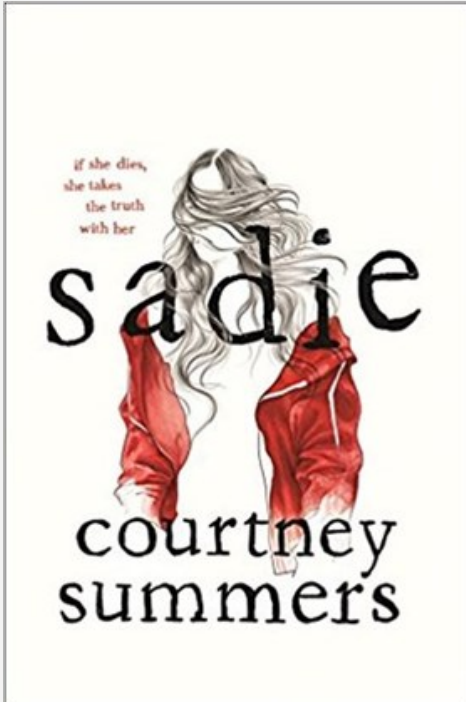
The publication date for *AEJ* Volume 5.1 is set for October 2019.

Submission are requested for the next issue of *AEJ* on this theme:

Educational Equity: Opportunities for All Students to Succeed.

Submit your documents to ACTELA123@gmail.com.

Arkansas English Journal Volume 4.1 is available online [here](#).



Sadie by Courtney Summers

**Published by Wednesday Books
an imprint of St. Martin's Press**

September 4, 2018

ISBN: 9781250105714

Content warning: contains discussion and descriptions of child sexual abuse, though not in a particularly detailed manner.

Alternating between podcast episode scripts and Sadie's own point of view, this story follows Sadie through the aftermath of the sexual assault and murder of her younger sister, thirteen-year-old Mattie. Sadie is on a mission to find and kill the man who killed her sister, and May Beth, her surrogate

grandmother, is on a mission to find Sadie after she disappears from her hometown with seemingly no trace.

Without Mattie, Sadie's life is hollow and empty, and her rage-fueled revenge quest is powerful and haunting. Sadie's story is one of relentless, soul-crushing grief with a plot that propels the reader full speed ahead into the brick wall of the ending. Sadie's stutter and its accompanying frustrations for her are blended with her sarcasm, sharp wit, and determination to get justice for her sister. The cast of complicated, deeply flawed characters are as realistic as they come, and this is a book that is bound to have a major impact on a large number of teen readers. The podcast scripts provide a change of pace from the narrative portions, and the book's chapters are short and well-defined, transitioning seamlessly from section to section. For a multimedia experience, readers can listen to the podcast script chapters in audio versions here: <https://us.macmillan.com/podcasts/podcast/the-girls-find-sadie/>.

Sadie is a great choice for teens who enjoy true crime, vigilante justice narratives, fast-moving plots, and powerful female characters. Read-alikes include *The Female of the Species* by Mindy McGinnis and Courtney Summers's previous title *All the Rage*.

Allie Stevens, Director of Calhoun County Library in Hampton, AR

This review is adapted from the original version that appeared on www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub in September 2018.

NCTE News

2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Make plans now to join us in Baltimore, Maryland this November for the annual convention. ELA teachers and literacy enthusiasts from throughout the nation, across the continent, and around the world will gather to share ideas and renew their love of teaching. ACTELA will receive a national award for our newsletter at the Affiliate Breakfast, and we will be presenting at the Affiliate Roundtables.

REGISTER NOW!!

BECAUSE
WISDOM BEGINS
WITH WONDER

You still have time to register at the Early-Bird rate until November 11, but after that date the price to attend rises.

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**Keynote speakers for
NCTE 2019**

George Takei
Tonya Bolden
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Meg Medina
Lilliam Rivera
Tommy George
Franki Sibberson
Tara Westover

Upcoming deadlines for NCTE Grants and Awards

<u>Research Foundation Teacher Grant Program</u>	1 October
<u>CCCC Outstanding Dissertation Award in Technical Communication</u>	15 October
<u>In Defense of Good Teaching Award</u>	15 November
<u>Achievement Awards in Writing</u>	15 December

ANNOUNCEMENTS, AWARDS, NEWS, AND NOTES

- ◆ Pamela Jones, who was our Arkansas Teacher for the Dream in 2016, has a new job as a Library Technician at UAM.
- ◆ Cindy Green, a former ACTELA President, was named Teacher of the Year by Virtual Arkansas in their inaugural award year.
- ◆ ACTELA claimed a third consecutive year of the Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence Award.
- ◆ Dr Kay Walter will be sharing information with other NCTE affiliates about Producing an Award-Winning Newsletter at the Affiliate Roundtable in Baltimore.
- ◆ ACTELA welcomes new members to its board: Emily Smith, Emily Jackson, Mindy Lynn, Dr Sarah Winterberg, Gina Bolick, Golden Mulkey, and Hailey Holiday.
- ◆ Sunny Styles-Foster and Jessica Herring Watson attended the summer Affiliate Meeting. Jessica's description appears on page 21.
- ◆ Jeff Wittingham had a whirlwind tour of the state giving booktalks and offering PD. See his report on page 26.
- ◆ Over the summer, Dr Kay Walter took part in the Second Faulkner Studies in the UK Symposium, sharing her paper, "Faulkner and the Moral Influence of Aunts."
- ◆ She also took part in her first storytelling event, Story Forge, in Sheffield where she shared an original story of creative nonfiction, "Why I Am from Arkansas."
- ◆ In June she spoke at the Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood Study Day and AGM,



presenting "Studying Ruskin in Arkansas."

- ◆ Her review of Francis O'Gorman's book, *Forgetfulness: Making the Modern Culture of Amnesia*, was published in *Moveable Type Volume 11: Decadence* and is available [here](#).
- ◆ Her review of Robert Hewison's book, *Ruskin and his Contemporaries*, is forthcoming in the

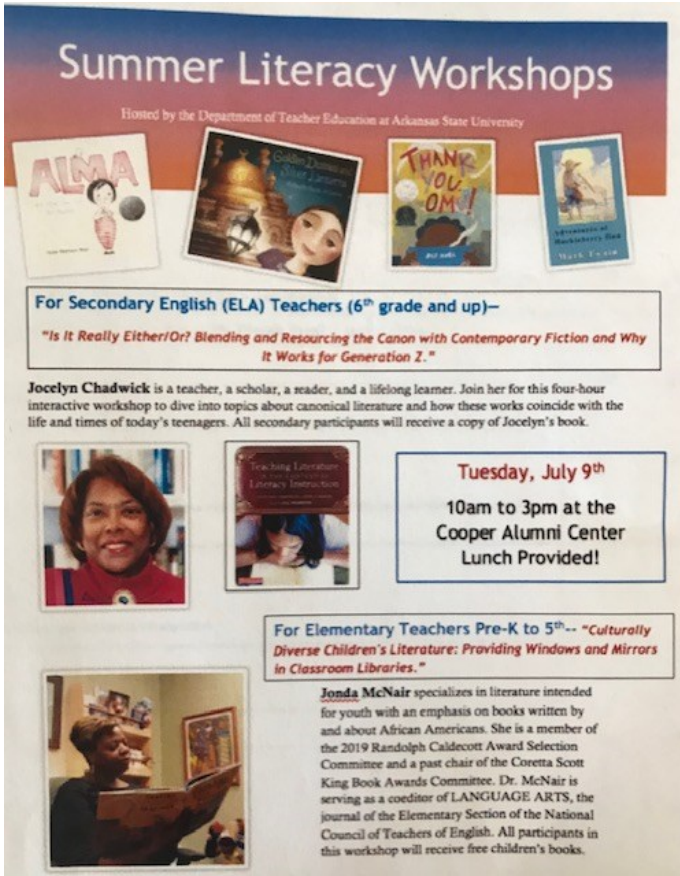
new online format for *Lifewriting Annual 5*. Watch for a link to it in the next issue of our newsletter.

- ◆ In July she took part in a CULD and ARKLink meeting at UCA which featured an eLearning Webcast, “Controversial Topics and Difficult Dialogues: Strategies for Addressing Misinformation in the Library.”
- ◆ She made a presentation for ten- to fifteen-year-olds at the Boys and Girls Club of Saline County Riverside about why they should aspire to a college education, “Education Is Not Child’s Play.”
- ◆ She contributed to the John Ruskin and the Beginning of the Arts & Crafts Movement Symposium of the Roycroft Campus in East Aurora, New York, speaking on “Teaching John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites in Rural Arkansas.”
- ◆ Along with 2000 other viewers in virtual attendance, she attended a livecast at UAM of Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s interview when the Supreme Court Justice spoke from the Verizon Arena in North Little Rock.
- ◆ Emily Jackson has a new Resident Assistant position at UAM in Horsfall Hall.
- ◆ ACTELA has made a successful launch into hosting regional gatherings. This summer, UCA hosted one conference at the same time ASU hosted another. Jocelyn Chadwick spoke at ASU’s Literacy Workshop on “Generation Z and Canonical Texts” while Jonda McNair spoke on “Culturally Diverse Children’s Literature: Providing Windows and Mirrors in Classroom Libraries,” and English teachers and school librarians from around the state gathered at UCA for a Media and Literacy Conference.
- ◆ Our newsletter currently boasts readers from 35 states, including Arkansas, and from 19 countries, including the USA.



- ◆ Dr Kay Walter’s students are proposing presentations at the Arkansas Philological Association this year, so stay tuned for a conference report from them.
- ◆ Dr Walter along with her undergraduate student, Braden Taylor, will be making presentations at the North American Victorian Studies Association conference next month, so you can look forward to a report on their success in the next issue. Her paper concerns “Mary Lamb, John Ruskin, and Needlecraft,” and his is about “Current Applications of *Unto this Last* by John Ruskin: The Cost and Value of Education in the 21st Century.”

ASU SUMMER LITERACY EVENT



Summer Literacy Workshops
Hosted by the Department of Teacher Education at Arkansas State University

For Secondary English (ELA) Teachers (6th grade and up)–
"Is It Really Either/Or? Blending and Resourcing the Canon with Contemporary Fiction and Why It Works for Generation Z."

Jocelyn Chadwick is a teacher, a scholar, a reader, and a lifelong learner. Join her for this four-hour interactive workshop to dive into topics about canonical literature and how these works coincide with the life and times of today's teenagers. All secondary participants will receive a copy of Jocelyn's book.

Tuesday, July 9th
10am to 3pm at the Cooper Alumni Center
Lunch Provided!

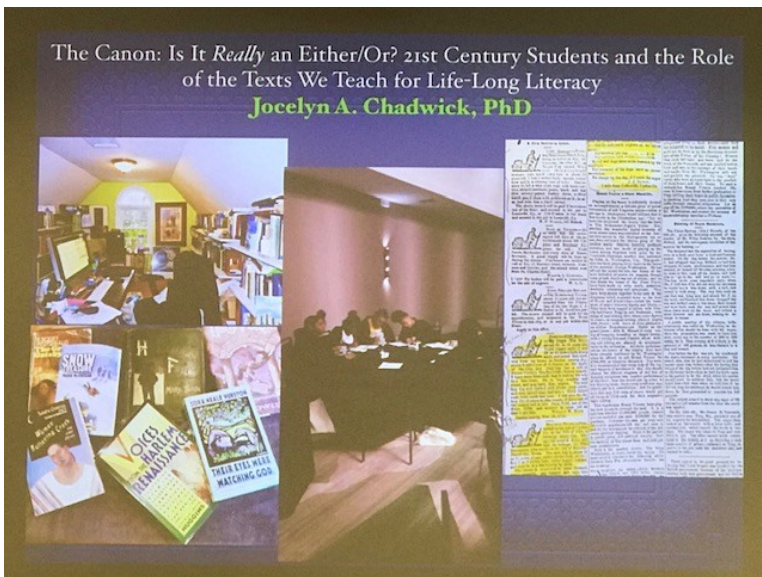
For Elementary Teachers Pre-K to 5th– *"Culturally Diverse Children's Literature: Providing Windows and Mirrors in Classroom Libraries."*

Jonda McNair specializes in literature intended for youth with an emphasis on books written by and about African Americans. She is a member of the 2019 Randolph Caldecott Award Selection Committee and a past chair of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee. Dr. McNair is serving as a coeditor of LANGUAGE ARTS, the journal of the Elementary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English. All participants in this workshop will receive free children's books.

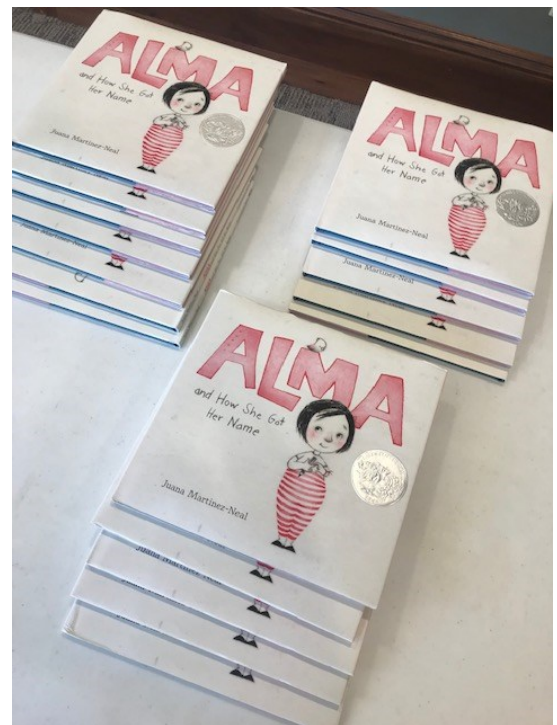


Dixie Keyes introduces Joceyln Chadwick to the group of secondary school English teachers for her talk on the peculiar needs of Generation Z students in approaching the study of canonical literary texts.

Literacy Workshop attendees divided into groups of secondary and elementary school teachers at ASU.



Part of the presentation included a peek into Dr Chadwick's office.



Elementary teachers went home with a new book.

July 16, 2019
Dr. Kay J. Walter
Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and
Language Arts
walter@uamont.edu

Dear Dr. Kay J. Walter:

Congratulations! *The English Pub* has been chosen as one of 10 Newsletters of Excellence in the 2019 NCTE Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence Award contest. (It was also one of two with a perfect score!) You and your affiliate can take great pride in the recognition this award brings to your affiliate for excellence in newsletter writing.

The judges noted that *The English Pub*, published by ACTELA features interesting articles written in engaging, fluent voice that teachers will find useful; a pleasing balance of informational and creative articles; and a good balance of teacher professional development articles along with affiliate information. Judges felt that “The newsletter communicates short and long term goals clearly. The newsletter is easy to read, organized, and appealing to its audience. Its writing is purposeful, personal, and effective.”

Please make plans for a member of your affiliate to accept your award at the Affiliate Breakfast in Baltimore, scheduled for Sunday, November 24th, at 7:00 AM--note that those attending the breakfast need to purchase a breakfast ticket in advance.

Thank you for your participation in the 2019 NCTE Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence contest.

Sincerely,
Julie Rucker, SCOA Region 3 Representative
Chair, 2019 NCTE Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence
Award

cc: Linda Walters-Moore, Affiliate Office
Kirstey Ewald, Chair of SCOA



Rashod Ollison Memorial Scholarship



The Rashod Ollison Memorial Scholarship Fund has been founded to support Arkansas high school minorities who are interested in pursuing a college education at UCA or U of A, Fayetteville with majors in journalism, creative writing, and African-American studies. Currently, the scholarship is \$1000 for one year.

Rashod Ollison (1977-2018) was an award-winning pop music critic and culture journalist. He was a staff critic and feature writer for the *Dallas Morning News*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Journal News* (Westchester, New York), *Baltimore Sun*, and *Virginian Pilot*. He also wrote a music column for *Jet* magazine. In 2016, Ollison published *Soul Serenade: Coming of Age Through Vinyl*, his critically-acclaimed story of growing up in Central Arkansas, influenced by his family's love of R&B music, which has already gone into a second printing from Beacon Press. A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, Ollison lived in Virginia Beach and passed away in 2018.

To donate to the Rashod Ollison Memorial Scholarship fund:
www.arcf.org/ollison All donations are appreciated.

Request a scholarship application via email at
rashodollisonsscholarship@gmail.com

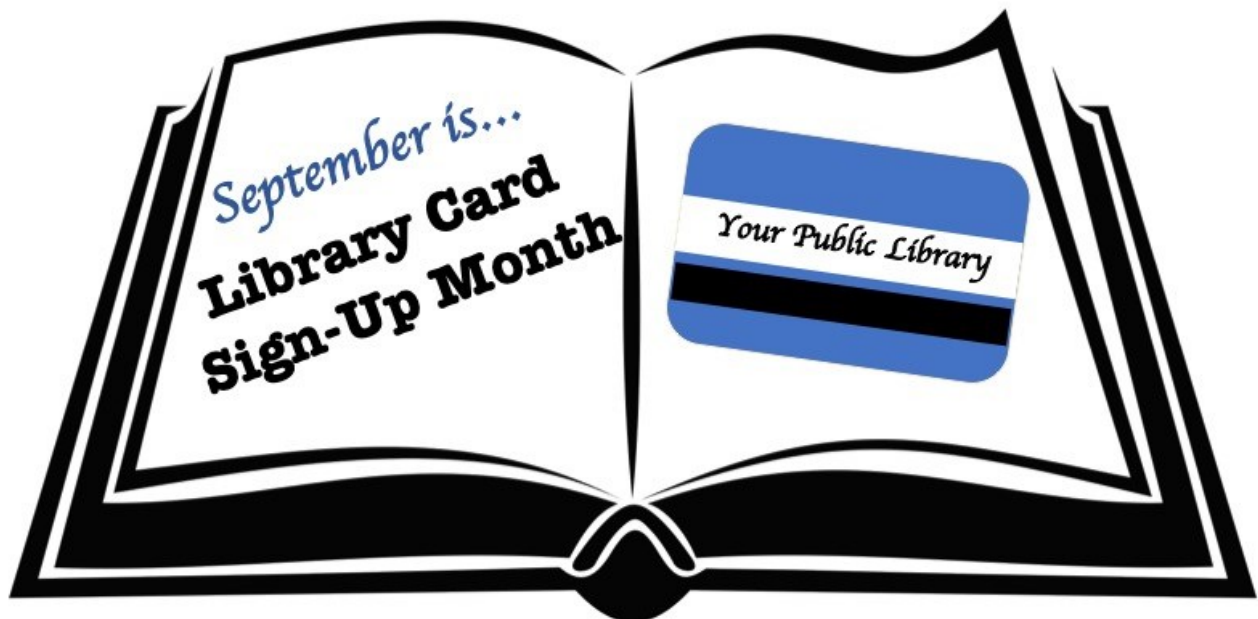
Got a Library Card you're proud of? Send us a picture!



Dr Walter pursues research in the New York Public Library.



Emily and Braden are Saline County library patrons.



Reflections on the NCTE Affiliate Meeting

by Jessica Herring Watson
University of Central Arkansas

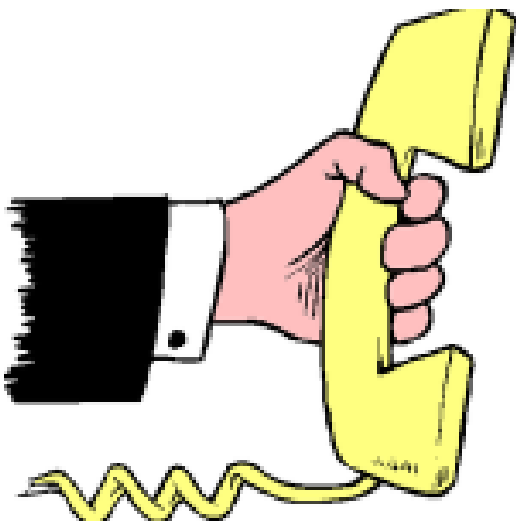
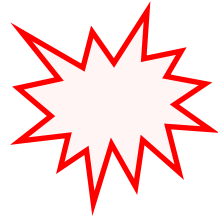
The NCTE Affiliate Meeting was two days well spent in writing, reflecting, and connecting with affiliate leaders from across the United States. Sunny Styles-Foster and I had the opportunity to hear from NCTE leadership about exciting new initiatives that are on the horizon, including partnerships with booksellers to get low-cost, high-quality books into the hands of diverse student popula-



Jessica Herring Watson and Sunny Styles-Foster relax between talks at the NCTE Affiliate Meeting.

tions and building excitement about this year's keynote speakers for the national conference. The majority of our time was spent in conversation with other state affiliate leaders regarding best practices at the state level. It was so interesting to learn from affiliates with large memberships that have numbers over 2,000 as well as small but growing affiliates with lower membership numbers.

Across organizations of all sizes, a common challenge and opportunity is recruiting, engaging, and retaining membership. This was a prominent discussion across our two days together. Of particular interest were the ways that different states are using technology and media to engage their membership throughout the year, in addition to hosting annual state conferences. We also spent a considerable amount of time discussing advocacy initiatives and hearing from state affiliates like Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts that have strong advocacy day initiatives with their state legislatures and are seeing clear results from their work with state lawmakers. Overall, we both left the affiliate meeting excited to find new ways to serve Arkansas's literacy educators and encourage the growth of our organization.



**It's for
you.**

Annual membership in ACTELA is only \$20 in 2019.



Professor Robert Lamm
serves as Director of
English Education at ASU.

Writing the Collaborative Research Paper and Teaching *The Tempest*

by Rob Lamm

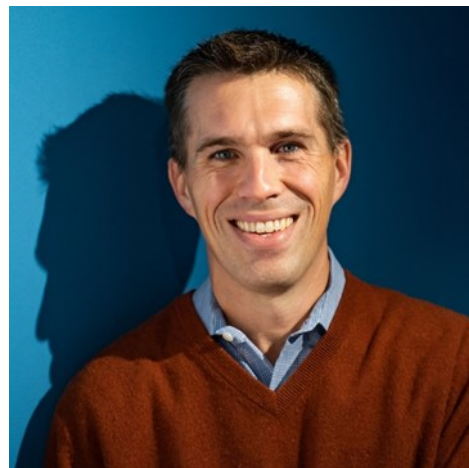
Arkansas State University

This summer I taught a graduate course called “Teaching Literature in the Schools.” The course, true to its title, is meant to be pedagogical, and I enjoyed sharing methods and materials with eleven students. The students were varied in their professional goals: a few were already teaching high school or middle school, a few were pre-service, one was headed for medical school, and the rest would follow their master’s degrees with other pursuits.

I knew the course’s most challenging task would be the term project—customarily, a well-documented essay. Unfortunately, the fleeting five weeks of the summer session (end of May to end of June) would force each student to choose a topic quickly and then work feverishly through long evenings and weekends. This summer, however, I provided an alternative project: They could collaborate to create a single product, a study guide for Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* that would actually be used by high school students and their teachers.

Why *The Tempest*, and why a study guide? This April 2020, the Theater Department at Arkansas State University will produce *The Tempest*. The play’s [scheduled performances](#) will include a free matinee for high school students. In anticipation of this spring production, Marc Williams—theater professor, director, and interim chair of that department—visited our summer class in early June to invite my students to create a study guide suitable for the students and teachers who would attend that matinee

According to Dr. Williams, the study guide could resemble other such resources, but it should also be flexible. For example, not all the teachers using the guide would actually



Marc Williams, Interim Chair of
ASU Department of Theatre



(L to R) Andrew Duckworth, Nikki Logan, Rayna Kingston, and Nicole LaCount

be teaching the play in its entirety. Instead, they might need some quick ways to prepare their students for a live performance.

Consequently, synopses of scenes and other shortcuts should be included in the guide. Also, the April 2020 production may have

special elements, such as modern dress rather than Elizabethan costumes. Since the theater program at ASU has more female than male students, some characters' gender may change. These directorial decisions had not yet been made, so the guide will undergo final revision before publication this spring.

After Dr. Williams visited our class, the students needed to decide whether or not to commit to creating a study guide. I didn't want to coerce them into this collaborative project, so I clarified that individuals were free to write a more traditional paper on any other "Teaching Literature" topic. At first only a few students joined the collaboration. In a matter of days, though, eight were working together as a team, a ninth was researching an annotated bibliography for *The Tempest*, while the remaining two students were working on individual projects not related to the study guide.

How did I help the students collaborate? I provided models of other guides. I let them view the play on CDs and YouTube clips but mixed the productions so

they would offer many visual interpretations: The 1960 version (with Maurice Evans as Prospero, Richard Burton as Caliban, Roddy McDowell as Ariel, and Lee Remick as Miranda), the 2010 version (with Helen Mirren as Prospera, Djimon Hounsou as Caliban, Ben Whishaw as Ariel, and Felicity Jones as Miranda), and



Group work in class, (L to R) Nicole Johnson, Andrew Duckworth, Nikki Logan, Rayna Kingston, Weston Jones, and Nicole LaCount

scenes from a few other productions. I provided time (the last third of each class session) they could use to work together planning, researching, composing, and peer reviewing. I advised them to make sure they covered the major features of guides: character descriptions, discussion of themes, historical contexts, vocabulary and Elizabethan language notes, and more. I showed them the Arkansas English Language Standards and asked them to find, adapt, or create lessons that align with the standards.

My most important contribution to the collaboration? I stayed out of their way. Although I would occasionally sit with them as they worked together, most often I let them do it themselves. From what I could see, all shared the leadership role. These are the authors and their parts of the study guide:

Busayo Adebisi
Harmony Brown
Andrew Duckworth

Annotated Bibliography
Shakespeare's Language
Stage Conventions and Shakespeare
Biography

Nicole Johnson
Weston Jones
Rayna Kingston

Cross-curricular Pre-viewing Activity
Scene Synopses
History of Elizabethan England and the
Theatre



Dr Lamm and his students are pleased with the outcome of their collaborative work.

(L to R, front row) Nicole LaCount, Rob Lamm, Nicole Johnson, Weston Jones, Harmony Brown, and Dylan Travis (L to R, back row) Nikki Logan, Rayna Kingston, and Andrew Duckworth

Not pictured: Busayo Adebisi

Nikki Logan
Nicole Roberson LaCount
Dylan Travis

Music in *The Tempest*
Characters
Influences of Sea Venture and Sailing

Ultimately, the study guide will be published in several ways, primarily as a digital document online for teachers to access with perhaps some print versions. The students are polishing their collective work in hope that an academic journal will publish the study guide for a larger audience.

Busayo Adebisi worked individually to create an annotated bibliography focused on *The Tempest* for her contribution to the group project.



Summer Booktalking

by Jeff Wittingham

University of Central Arkansas



During the past summer I had the wonderful opportunity to provide professional development at seven educational cooperatives (Walnut Ridge, Helena, Branch, Beebe, Arkadelphia, Harrison, and Plummerville). I presented three hour booktalks at each of these locations and then did some extra sessions on collaborative writing using Google and developing character in writing using Pinterest. At each of these locations, I met many ELA, literacy, and content teachers as well as librarians from all levels. It was so much fun to sit and talk to these teachers who were excited about

reading and finding outstanding literature to use with their students. I also received many book recommendations that I am now reading. One of the books that was recommended was *The Sands of Kalahari* by William Mulvihill. It's about a group of five individuals who survive a plane crash in the Kalahari Desert. No one knows they were



Dr Wittingham finds a rapt audience wherever he goes to talk about books for young readers.

flying or where they were headed. There is no way out. The book deals with the way each group member approaches survival. I'm already reading for next summer and I am also planning sessions on literacy strategies and how the pieces of the state's reading initiative will fit into booktalking and reading motivation. I'm also excited to announce that I have been invited to do a booktalk as a keynote speaker at the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media conference next April.

One of the wonderful things about professional development in English is the opportunity it gives us to network with new colleagues and meet new friends. This summer when I spoke at Brantwood, I made the acquaintance of a fellow presenter. She provides our global perspective for this issue, inviting us all to consider the importance of context to our communication.



Global Perspective



Context Counts

by Chris Pool

Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Recently I was reviewing the thoughts of John Ruskin (1819-1900) on the role of educators, as expressed in a letter to Thomas Dixon, in *Time and Tide* (1867). As ever, Ruskin insists on the importance of truth--both imparted and inculcated. This brought to mind two recent occasions when I came across information which gave a false impression of Ruskin himself. The first was when I visited a little museum in Ford village, Northumberland, England, established in 1860 by Lady Waterford, initially as a schoolroom for the education of the poor children on her estate. The central space contains a wonderful series of Pre-Raphaelite murals depicting Biblical scenes, painted by Lady Waterford herself, using the villagers as models.

I had always believed that Lady Waterford (1818-1891) had greatly admired Ruskin after reading the first volume of his book *Modern Painters* (1842). It consequently came as a surprise when the museum's docent, whose responsibility it was to give initial background information to visitors, announced, on learning that my interest in Lady Waterford had come via Ruskin, that she, Lady Waterford, had not liked him. I expressed my puzzlement but tried to resign myself to the thought that Lady Waterford's cordial dealings with Ruskin, in correspondence and through mutual friends, their shared concerns about the welfare of the poor, and the value she placed on his criticism of her art work, had been merely a façade.



Ford Museum

As I wandered around the museum, however, I discovered that this refined, aristocratic beauty had caused a sensation by marrying the extremely wealthy but somewhat wild, untamed, hell-raising Irish Lord Waterford. The marriage had been a surprising success and after his premature death in 1859 Lady Waterford, though still young and beautiful, had



Lady Waterford's Murals

remained a widow. The difference between her husband and Ruskin was huge. I suggested to the docent that Lady Waterford's "dislike" of Ruskin might have related to his being of a somewhat feminine physical type and not to his character. She conceded that this had not occurred to her.

I just happened, very recently, to be re-reading some of Ruskin's correspondence, edited by the late Professor Van Akin Burd in his book *The Winnington Letters*, when I came across words of Lady Waterford's in a footnote, written on 3 March 1863, and quoted from Augustus Hare's *Story of Two Noble Lives*: "I find myself in the *ideal* for all the poetic and intellectual, but in the *real* I always like the rough and manly. Ruskin is the reverse of the man I like, and yet his intellectual part is quite my ideal." I shall write to the museum to rectify their misconception of Lady Waterford's opinion of Ruskin.

In 2002, as a retirement project, I began an MA (Master of Arts) course in Ruskin Studies at the University of Lancaster. For my thesis topic I focused on the period Ruskin spent in the little French village of Mornex, Haute-Savoie, between 1862 and 1863. My first degree had been in French and, quite by coincidence, as a young student I had done a summer vacation job in this out-of-the-way village. Ruskin had rented two properties there, one of which was a little chalet with wonderful views of the Mont Blanc range of mountains. The chalet bears a plaque, erected in 1898, testifying to the fact that the composer, Wagner, as well as Ruskin, had once resided there--in 1856. (Ruskin's dates are incorrect on the plaque, however.)

Earlier this year a resident of the next village to Mornex who was aware of my



Detail of Lady Waterford's Murals

research sent me the text of an information board he had devised to be erected at the side of the chalet--subject to council approval. It offered more details about this residence of Ruskin and Wagner. He asked me to check his details in French concerning Ruskin and to correct, if necessary, his translation of them into English.

Some adjustment to the historical facts was, in fact, necessary, but his translation skills were good. However, one word jumped out at me, which I felt I had to contest and correct. He had declared Ruskin to be "pompous," based on the fact that in correspondence he referred to his chalet home as "the Empress's Cottage." I knew that after Wagner a more immediate predecessor of his in this little house had been the Grand Duchess Anna Feodorovna of Russia. Born Juliana of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld (1781-1860), she had changed her name on being baptised into the Greek Orthodox Church in preparation for her marriage in 1796 to Constantine, the second grandson of Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia. Anna was very unhappy within this marriage and was eventually granted a divorce in 1820.

Five years later, Alexander I of Russia died and Constantine, his heir apparent, was given the title of Emperor. However, he was never crowned, as after a month he abdicated in favour of his younger brother, Nicolas I. Ruskin would have known this story, if only from discussions with his friend, Doctor Gosse. The doctor had befriended and treated the Grand Duchess during her stay in Mornex. Only by token of her divorce, Anna had never been an Empress.

The late Dr Claude Weber, a local historian and long-time resident of Mornex, asserts that in Ruskin's time the chalet was, in fact, commonly known locally as the "Empress's Cottage." This is quite credible because even today, though its real name is the *Pavillon des Glycines* (Wisteria Cottage), it is more often than not referred to in the village as the *Pavillon Wagner*, (Wagner's Cottage)--even though the composer stayed there for barely a week before moving next door to the hydrotherapy clinic for treatment for a skin disease.

I had observed that Ruskin only ever used the term "Empress's Cottage" when writing to his father, John James Ruskin, and that in letters to friends he more than once referred to the chalet as his "den"—a somewhat humbler name for his abode! I believe that he used this term to John James as a short-cut reference. However, by so doing, he may have been pandering to his father's known interest in status and attempting to compensate



Plaque on the chalet in Mornex

for the fact that he was planning to settle permanently in the region. It is true to say that John James--no doubt to impress--readily informed at least one of Ruskin's aristocratic friends that the "Dowager Empress of Russia" had recently occupied the chalet!

The two examples I give were not deliberate attempts to misguide, and they are not, in the broader scheme of things, hugely significant, but I offer them as evidence of the importance of context when disseminating information.



**Questions or comments for our author
may be directed to the newsletter editor:**

walter@uamont.edu

Developing Connections



Pocket Points is a rewards based app that will keep your cell phone use in check. Search “Pocket Points” in your phone’s app store, and hit download!



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 the fun of reading and teaching gothic literature. Do you have scary stories you remember from your childhood that you would like to share with us? Send them to our [newsletter editor](#), and we can all enjoy a good thrill!

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In the April issue we promised a description of an app that monitors cell phone use in the classroom. We’ve been exploring Pocket Points, and have lots to share with you! We will provide a detailed report in an upcoming issue. In the meantime, take a look at the app for yourself and let us know what you think by emailing our [newsletter editor](#).