

# ACTELA Newsletter

Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts

As we make our ways from our classrooms to this year's conference, it is important to celebrate our activities and accomplishments. Read about your fellow members' adventures on page 4, and if you don't find yourself represented, take a moment to send your news for our next issue to our editor:

walter@uamont.edu

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## Letter from the President

As my presidency will end in December, I think back over the past two years to a host of meaningful and critical events and moments for ACTELA and for Arkansas ELA teachers. I'll speak more on that during ACTELA's luncheon on November 5 (hope to see you there!). For now, as I prepare for our guest author, Zetta Elliott's visit to our state, I'm mostly thinking about the lasting impact of ACTELA's initiatives, specifically bringing great authors to Arkansas. Zetta will visit six schools in three days and will facilitate 15 sessions with students, most involving unique writing experiences. Past authors Mike Mullin and Crystal Allen have both made return trips to Arkan-



sas to visit additional schools. Crystal even published the work of many students from Arkansas on her website! Our guest author from 2012, Matthew Quick has written and published three new books since we met him: FORGIVE ME, LEONARD PEACOCK, THE GOOD LUCK OF RIGHT NOW, and LOVE MAY FAIL. Crystal's new series about THE MAGNIFICENT MIA TIBBS debuts in January, and Mike Mullin is penning a FOURTH book in his ASHFALL series. Zetta brings us books with diverse characters for all ages and groups that feature urban fantasy, historical time travel in the tradition of Octavia Butler's KINDRED. Don't miss her at ACC 2015!

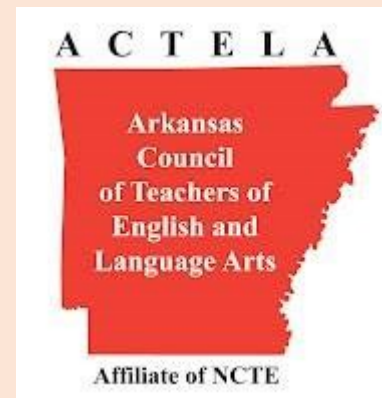
## Keep in Touch with Us!

Visit our website: <http://www.actela.org/home>

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

Or Friend us on Facebook:

Arkansas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts



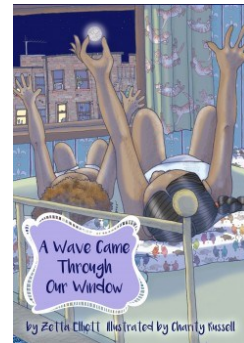
# Dr. Zetta Elliott is ACTELA's visiting author for 2015.



ACTELA is committed to bringing nationally-renowned authors to Arkansas students by arranging author visits each November.

Zetta Elliott's itinerary, from November 1-4, includes:

- Consolidated Youth Services in Harrisburg
- Arkansas State University preservice teachers and students campus-wide
- Nettleton Intermediate (in Jonesboro) students, 4-5th graders
- Blytheville High School and Blytheville Elementary School
- A Community reading at THAT BOOKSTORE in Blytheville
- Conway's Courtway Middle School



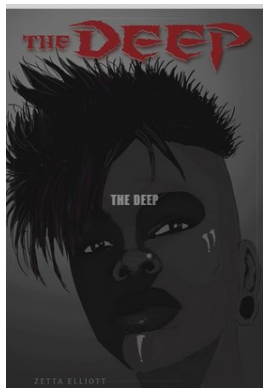
Hear an [Interview with Zetta Elliott](http://www.diyauthor.com/traditional-publishing-is-an-obsolete-model-with-author-zetta-elliott/) about her writing here:

<http://www.diyauthor.com/traditional-publishing-is-an-obsolete-model-with-author-zetta-elliott/>

Her books are available on Amazon or on her website at: [www.zettaelliott.com](http://www.zettaelliott.com)

THAT BOOKSTORE in Blytheville will be the book vendor at ACC this year and will have many of her books for sale!

**Build the diversity in your classroom library this year.**



THE DEEP

It has been almost a year since Nyla Evans moved from Ramstein Air Base in...



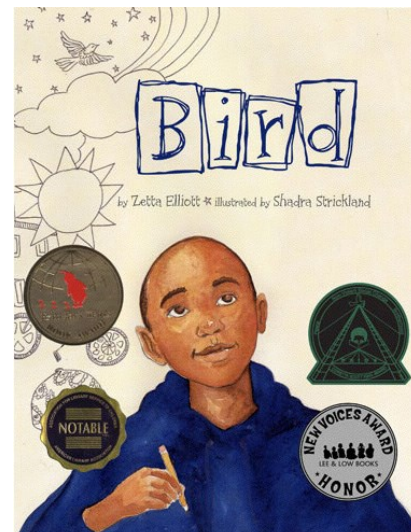
SHIP OF SOULS

Set in New York City, Ship of Souls features a cast of three African American...



A WISH AFTER MIDNIGHT

Fifteen-year old Genna Colon believes wishes can come true. When Genna flees into the garden...



## New Awards during ACTELA's Luncheon, 2015

**Preservice ELA Educator Award**—for exceptional academic scholarship in ELA coursework and early dedication to professional development and networking.

Awardee: Ashley Gauthier, Arkansas State University middle level ELA/Social Studies major

*(Ashley is pictured on the left; photo taken at the AMLE conference in October)*



**Early Career ELA Educator Award**—for commitment in advancing a love for reading and writing and for teacher leadership in the first four years of teaching ELA.

Awardee: Jae Glass, ELA and writing teacher at Buffalo Island Central Elementary School in Leachville



**Community Literacy Service Award**—for volunteerism in community literacy from a group that facilitates community literacy events such as poetry readings, dramatic performances or mixed-artist forums.

Awardee: Delta Ink, founders Jackie Dean and Carol Birth (Helena, Arkansas)



# ACTELA News and Notes:

ACTELA's President and Vice-President, Dixie Keyes and Cindy Green, were interviewed about ACTELA'S Collaborative Inquiry Team by NCTE's National Center for Literacy Education staff. The ACTELA CIT team will be featured as a "Portrait of Change" on the NCLE Literacy in Learning Exchange. Your school can be featured on this networking site as well. Contact Dixie or Cindy for more information, or go to <http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/>

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Congratulations and Hurrah for us! ACTELA Newsletter has been awarded Honorable Mention in the annual NCTE Affiliate Newsletter competition. The honors will be conveyed at the 2015 NCTE Annual Convention in Minneapolis, during the Affiliate Roundtable Breakfast on November 22.

\*

Congratulations to board member Dr. Kay Walter on her election to Companionship in the Guild of St George, a charitable organization established by John Ruskin in 1871 to support efforts in environmentalism and education.

\*

Ryan Kelly and Sunny Styles-Foster, ACTELA board members, participated in the Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English annual conference in September! Thanks for representing Arkansas there!

\*

Donna Wake (ACTELA ex-officio and board member) and current president Dixie Keyes were commissioned to write a research and comments analysis/review of the ELA Common Core State Standards by the Arkansas Department of Education to kick off the Common Core Standards review. It's great to see key literacy leaders in the state involved in such review work.

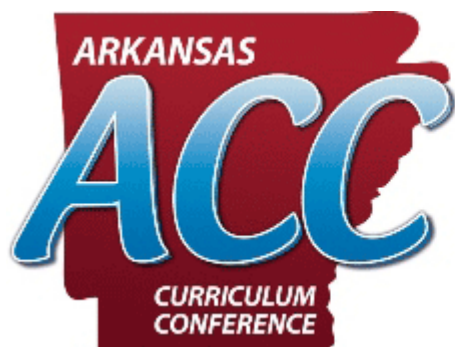
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Thanks to ACTELA's Intellectual Freedom representative, Grover Welch (Gosnell Junior High) for posting great links about Banned Books Week, September 21-26th.

## **ACTELA members, speak out!**

**Have news to share? If you are up for tenure or promotion, let us know so we can help you hope and wish you well. We welcome your announcements and input.**

# Arkansas Curriculum Conference 2015 Update



## Arkansas CURRICULUM CONFERENCE

**It's time to register for the 2015 ACC. Here is the address for the Wiki: [http://arkansascurriculumconference.pbworks.com/w/page/79024613/Arkansas\\_Curriculum\\_Conference](http://arkansascurriculumconference.pbworks.com/w/page/79024613/Arkansas_Curriculum_Conference)**

**Stop by the ACTELA table and say hello when you get there!**

### Session Highlights

**Zetta Elliott's ACTELA Luncheon presentation: "Inclusivity and Indie Authors: the Case for Community-Based Publishing"** in Salon A, 1120-140.

Her morning session: "Music Stirs Memories" in Lafayette, 910-1010am

Her afternoon session: "Crossing the Threshold: Afro-Urban Magic & the Door of No Return" in Lafayette, 150-250pm

### Dr. Linda Arnold to Accept Carolyn Pitman Lifetime Achievement Award

At this year's luncheon on Thursday, November 5th, the Pittman Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Dr. Linda Arnold by board members Dr. Rob Lamm and Dr. Kay Walter. To be present for Dr. Arnold's acceptance speech, be sure to purchase your luncheon tickets when you register for ACC 2015.

*Dr. Arnold is pictured here with past-president Erin McFalls-Johnson.*



# Publications and Professional Development

## Arkansas Anthology

Selections are open for publication in the 2016 issue. **Editor's Choice Awards** are presented at ACTELA's Luncheon each November. Attend the Arkansas Anthology session at ACC to hear selected authors read their work.

**Students whose writing is accepted into the anthology will receive a free print copy and a certificate.**

## AEJ

The theme for the first issue of The Arkansas English Journal (AEJ) is **Voices in Teaching English and Language Arts**. Final work and column-writing are being prepared for the inaugural publication. All submissions will be peer-reviewed, and electronic publication is anticipated in November.

Stay tuned for updates!



## Writing Opportunities

Join us at ACC for “The Great ACTELA Writing Marathon,” which is one of the ACTELA-sponsored sessions this year! Spend part of Thursday morning watching, observing, and writing about the moments and images of the day—from the Riverwalk to the clouds, to the people all around! Meet us at 910-1120 in the Neosho Room.

An “extended session” will be offered on the National Writing Project’s “Assignments Matter” grant, which features workshop time developing quality writing assignments for all disciplines. An online “Task Jam” is a central component, and participants will take away ready-to-implement plans for writing! Lafayette Room, 8-1120 on Friday morning.

Also, on Friday morning, from 1020-1120 in Caraway III, three NWP site directors in Arkansas will share information about initiatives and grants in various parts of the state, along with information about national networking and student publishing opportunities.

Do you know of opportunities we've overlooked? Send us word so we can share ideas

# Global Perspective

By J. Adam Clemons

Not having adequate access to information is a lot like being in a country where you do not speak the language. You know what you want, you just cannot find the information (or words, to continue the analogy) you need to get what you want. As a student of the American education system, this was never really an issue for me. If my library did not have what I needed for a class assignment, I had plenty of other options including using reliable, high speed internet to search expensive databases or requesting hard-to-find books via the Inter-Library Loan system. I never thought much about inadequate access to information until I traveled to Senegal as a Library Fellow for the West African Research Center (WARC) in Dakar, the capitol city.

WARC is the overseas headquarters of the international West African Research Association (WARA) based at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. As its name implies, WARC is a center for research, but it is much more than that. It is also a dedicated space in West Africa for collaboration among students and scholars from Senegal, West Africa, and the rest of the world. The center regularly hosts lectures, roundtables, book signings, film screenings, and exhibits. It also serves as a meeting place for international exchange programs for undergraduate and graduate students from all over the world.

In spite of all the good the Center achieves, I routinely observed students looking for books WARC didn't have or articles to which the Center didn't have access. The library at *Univesité Cheikh Anta Diop* (UCAD), Senegal's largest university and where most of the students visiting WARC Library attended offered little more. Where possible, students would do their best to locate the needed resource online (and I would help them), but our search efforts usually yielded information that was not quite what the student needed or just out of reach.

The reasons for the information access issues in Senegal, Africa, and much of the rest of the developing world are well beyond the scope of this paper, but the solutions I came up with to make more information accessible to these students are not. I started by creating an ever-evolving list of open access databases like *HathiTrust* and websites like *Africa South of the Sahara* that provides links to all things free related to Africa. I also recommended implementing a routine shelf reading program (library jargon for making sure the books are in correct call number order) and beginning a weeding program that would eliminate many of the outdated and obsolete titles taking up valuable shelf space. Lastly, I suggested using *libraryworld.com*, a web-based platform that could dramatically improve access to library resources and allow the library to prepare circulation statistics, patron counts, and monthly reports as well as give researchers access to the catalog anywhere internet is available.



I hope that the list of resources I came up with and the recommendations I made has improved every WARC visitor's access to information. Either way, the best part is that almost every bit of what I recommended was completely free. So, the lesson here is that whatever resource you need that is going to greatly enhance your student's learning experience is likely out there, and in a lot of cases it is completely free. You have just got to know where to look for it. Why not ask your librarian?



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## A Literary Journey

In May, four students traveled to Great Britain for three weeks to learn about British Masterpieces in Context with Dr. Kay Walter. They studied Medievalism in 1066 Country, Renaissance in and around Stratford-upon-Avon, and Romanticism and Victorianism in the Lake District.

Highlights of the trip included visits to Canterbury Cathedral, Rudyard Kipling's home, and Shakespeare's grave. Experts on John Ruskin met with the group and told them about scholarly works-in-progress. For information about future travel seminar courses in English, contact Dr. Kay Walter [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)





# Visiting Scholar



The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) hosted a visiting author from England on 18 September 2015. Mr. Paul Dawson spoke about John Ruskin at a faculty luncheon gathering attended by twenty-nine faculty members and guests. He also guest lectured in two courses: a British Literature class where he spoke about Gothic Revival in art and architecture and a Basic English class where he spoke about the influence of Victorian literacy developments on the life and career of George Allen. For more information on this and similar upcoming events, contact Dr. Kay Walter by email: [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)

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Have ideas you'd like to see discussed in our newsletter?  
Send them to our newsletter editor at [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)