

A newsletter of the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts  
[www.opi.mt.gov/matela](http://www.opi.mt.gov/matela)

MEA CONFERENCE IN MISSOULA

## Karen Blumenthal Keynoter for MATELA & MLA

By Caitlin Chiller



MATELA and the Montana Library Association (MLA) are excited to co-sponsor Karen Blumenthal as this year's Keynote Speaker at the MEA-MFT Educators' Conference to be held in Missoula Oct. 16-17.



Her keynote, entitled "Teaching True Stories: The Real Life Adventure of Nonfiction," will focus on the way true stories challenge us through plot, narrative, compelling characters, and the ability to better make sense of the world around us.



**Blumenthal**

Blumenthal is the author of eight nonfiction books, including five award-winning books for young people and three investing-related books for adults.

Her most recent book, *Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different*, was a finalist for the 2013 American Library Association's Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults award and has been on several state book lists.

Her book on prohibition, *Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine and the Lawless Years of Prohibition*, also was a finalist for the young-adult nonfiction award and was named to the Kirkus, School Library Journal and Booklist best-of-the-year lists. She has also written about the stock market crash of 1929 and how girls came to play sports.

Her next book, due out in 2015, is a biography of the Tommy gun, the first weapon created for war to move to the streets.

Blumenthal is a long-time financial journalist who previously was business editor of *The Dallas Morning News* and Dallas bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*.

She is a graduate of Duke University and has an MBA from Southern Methodist University.

Blumenthal will deliver her keynote address in the Sentinel High School Auditorium at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 17.

### MATELA to co-sponsor Fort Missoula Institute: Teaching Japanese-American Internment during WWII

In addition to the keynote speaker, MATELA is also sponsoring a session entitled "Teaching Japanese-American Internment during World War II" Friday, Oct. 17. The session will be held at The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula, 3400 Captain Rawn Way starting at 8:30 a.m.

Light refreshments will be served. Speakers include Sam Mihara, Kristjana Eyjolfsson, Diane Sand, Jim Brugeman, Kaydee Kaiser, Danice Toyias, Caitlin Chiller, and Beverly Ann Chin. Chiller and Chin are representing

MATELA.

Topics will include a history of the fort; legal challenges to internment; the

homesteader program at Heart Mountain—process of successful conversion of the former prison property to returning veterans to start new rural businesses, which includes development of Heart Mountain's modern agriculture, starting with the Japanese farmers while in camp; instructional approaches to teaching Japanese-American internment; the geography of internment through GIS; internment instructional units; and teaching literature about Japanese-American Internment.

See MEA Page 2

**For a full listing of MATELA-sponsored sessions, see MEA Page 2**

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## MEA FROM PAGE 1

# Plan to Attend MATELA Sectionals at MEA

"Every year it is my pleasure to invite you to the annual MEA-MFT Educators' Conference, the largest teacher professional development event in Montana.

"Every year I remind folks that our conference is all about you, you the classroom educator who does the work that matters and makes an all-day difference in the lives of our students and school communities.

## Thursday's Sectionals

Session	Room	Session Title
8-8:50	MCAD17	Reversing Research Revulsion
8-8:50	MCAD05	Engaging Books to Teach Critical Literacy
9-9:50	MCAD06	Poetry Out Loud
9-9:50	MCAD05	Montana Indian Poetry-Themes and Strategies
9-9:50	MCHB01	Engaging Our Students as Readers and Writers
9-9:50	MCAD04	RSVP: Ruby Shields Valley Collaborative Project
10-10:50	MCAD17	Silent Sustained Reading- A Practical Solution
10-10:50	MCAD05	Submitting to Signatures from Big Sky
10-10:50	MCHB08	The Pura Belpre Award: Latino Books for Children
10-10:50	MCAD04	Poetry Connection to Character and Theme
11-11:50	MCAD05	The Round House: A Book Trailer
11-11:50	MCAD06	New Historical Criticism and Puritan Texts
12-12:50	MCAD05	Signatures from Big Sky Annual Board Meeting
1-1:50	MCHB08	ELA Common Core Tech Integration
1-1:50	MCAD04	Applying CCSS Appendix A and Appendix C
2-2:50	MCAD06	Teaching Reading Through Movement
2-2:50	MCAD04	Using and Supplementing CCSS ELA Appendix B
2-2:50	MCHB08	The Best Nonfiction Books: Orbis Pictus Awards
2-2:50	MCAD17	Take the Adventure ~ Primary Sources
2-2:50	MCAD05	Increasing Student Investment in the Curriculum
3-3:50	MCAD06	Controversial Language in the Classroom/NCTE
3-3:50	MCAD05	Geometric Expression: Designing a Playground
3-3:50	MCAD04	Localizing Evidence Based Practices
3-3:50	MCAD17	New Historical Criticism and Puritan Texts
4-4:50	MCAD04	Reading Landscapes
4-4:50	MCAD17	Connecting Students through Literacy & Service
4-4:50	MCHB01	Reading a Treaty--Loss and Survival
4-4:50	MCAD05	Looking for a BetterLesson? Look Here!

"Every year I note that classroom educators design and deliver hundreds of conference sectionals meant to test and improve classroom instruction.

"And every year I urge conferees to participate in an absolutely FREE and spectacular dinner to celebrate the teaching profession with the selection of another Teacher of the Year.

"It just doesn't get better than this."



**Eric Feaver**  
President MEA/MFT

## Friday's Sectionals

Session Time	Room	Session Title
7-7:50	MCDining	MATELA Executive Board Meeting
8-8:50	MCAD17	Where is Mona?
8-8:50	MCAD04	A New Way to Analyze and Teach Young Adult Lit
8-8:50	MCAD06	Increasing Student Investment in the Curriculum
9-9:50	MCAD04	Silent Sustained Reading- A Practical Solution
9-9:50	MCAD06	Poetry Connection to Character and Theme
9-9:50	MCAD17	Reading and Writing about Art and War
9-9:50	MCAD05	Multimodal Poetry: Building Comprehension
10-10:50	MCHB08	Engaging Our Students as Readers and Writers
10-10:50	Sentinel Auditor.	Teaching True Stories: The Real Life Adventure of Nonfiction
11-11:50	MCAD05	Montana Indian Poetry-Themes and Strategies
11-11:50	MCAD17	Reaching Native students, Teaching Native Content
11-11:50	MCAD04	Demystifying Common Core State Standards
12-12:50	MCHB01	MATELA Business Meeting
1-1:50	MCAD05	Submit a Book Manuscript for Publication
1-1:50	MCHB01	Continuing the Conversation – Common State Standards
1-1:50	MCAD06	Reading and Writing about Art and War
1-1:50	MCHB08	Graphic Novels "Draw" Readers In
1-1:50	MCAD06	Reading Landscapes
2-2:50	MCAD04	RSVP: Ruby Shields Valley Collaborative Project
2-2:50	MCAD05	What I learned in my first two years
2-2:50	MCAD17	Writing Poems for Two Voices

## Special Event for Educators: How Educators Can Fight Censorship and Save Books



Book burning in Opera Square,  
Berlin, May 10, 1933. *US  
Holocaust Memorial Museum,  
courtesy of National Archives  
and Records Administration,  
College Park, MD*

**Tuesday, October 28, 2014  
5 - 7 pm  
UM Mansfield Library, Level 3**

We invite you to attend an evening of round table discussion focused around the exhibition “Fighting the Fires of Hate: America and the Nazi Book Burnings.” This exhibition was produced by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and is on display at the Mansfield Library from October 27 – December 17, 2014. This event is sponsored by the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts (MATELA) and the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, and is organized by Beverly Ann Chin, Director of English Teaching Program, University of Montana.

If you are interested in books from a wide variety of genres that address censorship and book burning, please join us as we share effective strategies for both teaching about and dealing with censorship. Local educators will share texts and teaching ideas related to censorship and book burning. Everyone interested in censorship and book burning issues, both historic and contemporary, is welcome to attend. We also invite you to bring titles to add to our booklist, which will be posted on the UM library ([www.lib.umt.edu](http://www.lib.umt.edu)) and MATELA ([opi.mt.gov/matela](http://opi.mt.gov/matela)) websites.

**Free and Open to the Public — Light refreshments served**

The exhibition, “Fighting the Fires of Hate: America and the Nazi Book Burnings,” is open that day from 7am to 2am.

For more information about this exhibition and event, please contact Julie Biando Edwards at [julie.edwards@umontana.edu](mailto:julie.edwards@umontana.edu) or 243-4505 and visit [www.lib.umt.edu](http://www.lib.umt.edu) for a schedule of events.

This exhibition was underwritten in part by grants from The Bernard Osher Jewish Philanthropies Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund and The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, with additional support from the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund established in 1990. It is brought to the University of Montana with generous support from Humanities Montana, the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, the Davidson Honors College, the College of Humanities and Sciences, and in partnership with the departments of History, English, Political Science, Sociology, and Liberal Studies, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the Global Leadership Initiative, the University Center Art Gallery, the University Center Theater, the Montana Human Rights Network, and the Missoula Public Library.

Exhibition produced by:

**UNITED STATES  
HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
MUSEUM**



## MONTANA DIGITAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORK

**HeartLines: Engaging Students in Tribal Materials and Common Core Skills Course Now Offered Online through MDPLN**

By Anna Baldwin

**L**iving in Montana means an expanse of prairie and sky and striking mountain peaks. It means wilderness and a diverse mix of people. It means every extreme of weather.



And...living in Montana means a lot of driving. In the past, teachers have driven to towns near and far for conferences, meetings, and workshops. Wouldn't it be convenient, especially in winter, if these opportunities were made available online? The Montana Digital Professional Learning Network, launched in 2014, now provides this service.

I was fortunate to have the chance to offer my course, HeartLines: Engaging Students in Tribal Materials and Common Core Skills, via MDPLN this summer. This is a course I developed a short time ago for K-12 teachers in all subject areas.

I designed the course because the HeartLines Project, a branch of the

Center for American Indian Policy and Applied Research, has created a wealth of excellent tribal resources for teachers touching on history, art, music, language arts, science, and pedagogy; they are available in print, CD, and DVD forms.

I wanted to share them with teachers across the state; thus an online format was appropriate. I also know teachers are always interested in earning credits, so I arranged with the University of Montana to offer two undergraduate or graduate credits.

Designing a course in Moodle is easy, particularly if you have taken a Moodle-based course yourself. The built-in modules can be renamed whatever you choose. My course is set up to

last 10 weeks, so I organized it by week, each focusing on a separate set of resources.

In addition to these resources, each week includes a discussion forum and Common Core Connection video which I created on the Educations website for free. To upload a resource such as a handout or digital audio file, the course developer clicks "Add an Activity or Resource," chooses which kind of item to

add, and clicks through to upload it from the computer or link to a website. I have uploaded audio and video files, PDFs and word documents, and

*As an English teacher and literacy coach, my focus is always on developing literacy skills. We know these skills bolster students' ability in subjects other than ELA.*

See HEARTLINES Page 6



# MATELA Holds Annual Business Meeting at MEA

## *Social Media, MATELA-Sponsored Projects on Agenda*

A new webpage, Facebook presence and other means of communication will be up for discussion at MATELA's business meeting 12 p.m. Oct. 17, at MCHB01 in Missoula.

Up until this point, MATELA's webpage has been maintained by OPI, which didn't provide members with instant access to editing or posting items. The board will also decide on whether the association should purchase a domain name for its website.

Other items on the agenda include a Treasurer's report, Presidential address and MATELA-sponsored projects.

## Agenda

Friday, October 17, Noon, Missoula College Health Building 01

Minutes of 2013 meeting for approval

<http://matelamt.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/6/9/25698627/2013-minutes-annual-business-meeting.pdf>

1. Slate of officers for vote (Curt Bobbitt, President-University of Great Falls; Caitlin Chiller, 1st Vice President/Conference Chair--Sun River Schools; Brenda Lamb, 2nd Vice President/Membership--Sun River Schools; Dawn Sievers, Treasurer-Power School)
2. Treasurer's financial report
3. Publications (*Update*, *MEJ delay*, website, Facebook)
4. MATELA-supported projects ("Fighting Fires of Hate" at UM, regional conference plan, social gathering in Helena, history-of-MATELA)
5. OPI initiatives
6. NCTE programs and opportunities
7. MATELA Distinguished Educator Award."
8. Adjourn

## MATELA HUMANITIES MONTANA SPEAKERS BUREAU PROGRAM

# Jim McKusick Presents 'The Poetics of Nature'

## News Release, Humanities Montana

MATELA will host Humanities Montana Speakers Bureau program "The Poetics of Nature" with Jim McKusick Oct. 15, at Jaker's Restaurant, 3515 Brooks St., Missoula.

Dinner will be on your own from 5 to 6:30 p.m., with the presentation starting at 6:30 p.m. The presentation is free and open to the public and renewal units will be offered.

This lecture examines the development of the concept of nature from ancient Greek mythology and philosophy through the advent of modern science and technology.

Through a close reading of William Wordsworth's poetry, McKusick demonstrates that an ecological understanding of nature first emerged among the British Romantic poets. This new, holistic worldview has become an important component of our own understanding of the North American landscape, contributing to our sense of the right relationship between people and the places they inhabit.

Jim McKusick of Missoula, dean of the Davidson Honors College and professor of English at the University of Montana, has over 25 years of teaching experience at public universities. He is deeply committed to promoting public discourse as a means to achieve greater awareness of environmental issues of concern to all Montanans.

Partial funding for the Speakers Bureau program is pro-



**McKusick has 25 years at public universities. Join him for dinner.**

vided by a legislative grant from Montana's Cultural Trust.

For more information, please e-mail Caitlin Chiller at [ccchiller@srvs.k12.mt.us](mailto:ccchiller@srvs.k12.mt.us)



From Page 4:

## HEARTLINES: Course Fosters Consideration of Multiple Perspectives,

links to websites.

As an English teacher and literacy coach, my focus is always on developing literacy skills. We know these skills bolster students' ability in subjects other than ELA.

This course shares active pedagogy practices that support literacy instruction while drawing in content such as the science of prolonged dam operations on a river or the history of the Hellgate Treaty.

It asks teacher participants to develop lessons that incorporate tribal storytelling, music, or historical information while integrating these engaging strategies. For example, an agriculture teacher worked indigenous plant knowledge into her unit plan. A kindergarten teacher on a reservation across the state incorporated the concept of "home" into hers.

I have used many of these resources in my own classroom. Students in my multicultural literature course hear Jerome Vanderburg's flute recordings on the CD called *Remembering the Songs* as a way to place themselves into the setting of Debra Magpie Earling's novel *Perma Red*.

We use the story of Kwilqs, Salish woman warrior, from the CD *Heart of the Bitterroot* to help us understand the character of Red Dress in Susan Power's novel *The Grass Dancer*.

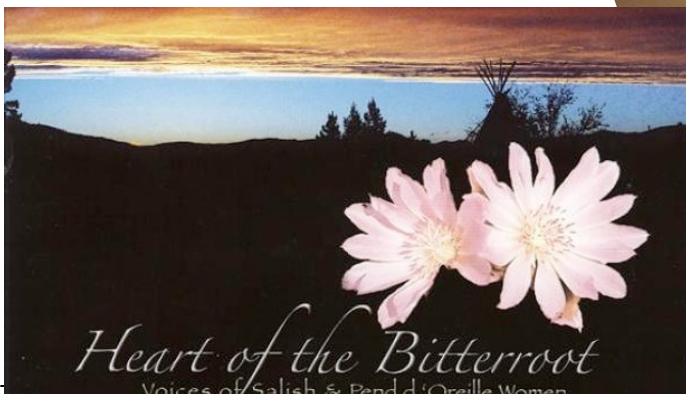
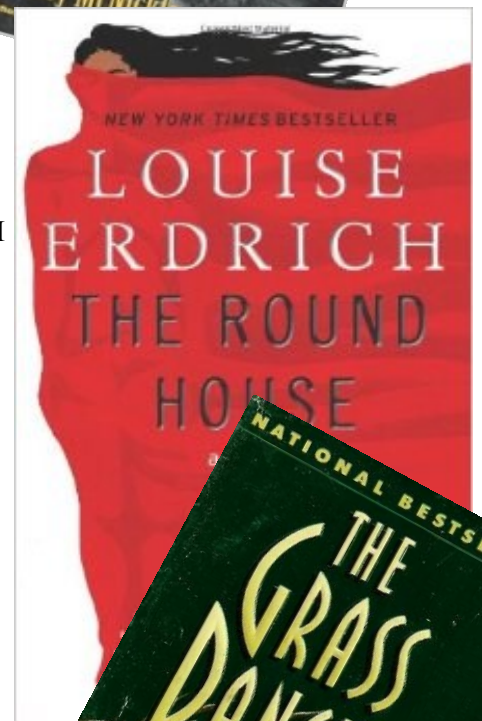
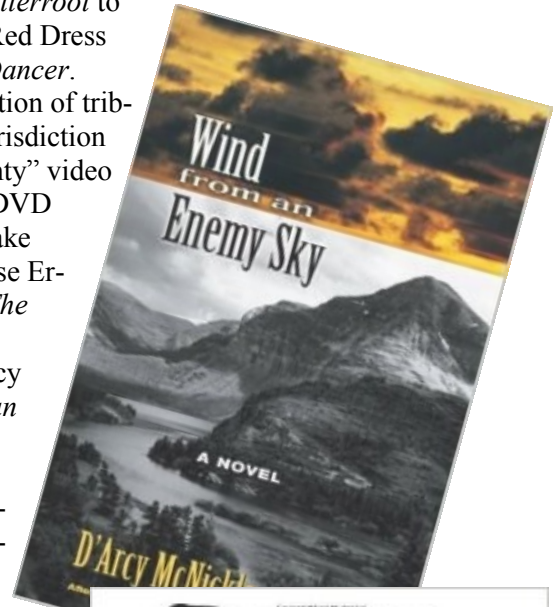
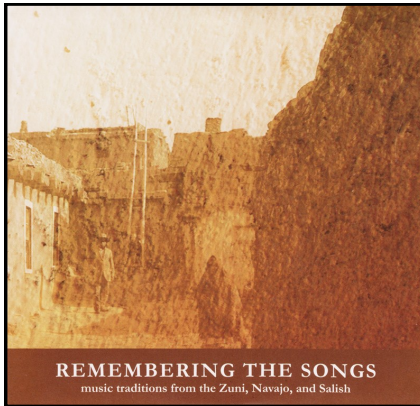
When we appreciate the intersection of tribal sovereignty and state or federal jurisdiction as described in the "Tribal Sovereignty" video in the *Stories from a Nation Within* DVD lecture series, we can make sense of the plot of Louise Erdrich's award-winning *The Round House*.

While reading D'Arcy McNickle's *Wind from an Enemy Sky*, my students learn in depth about the Hellgate Treaty, the Flathead Allotment Act, tribal sovereignty, the federal policy period of assimilation, and the effects of Kerr Dam on the Flathead River through several of the HeartLines' resources.

One of the biggest challenges of online teaching/learning is translating engaging pedagogy into a computer screen. How do I show teachers effective ways to design small group learning and inquiry-based discovery activities?

Some of the processes can be worked out through the forum questions. Others I can convey through mini videos I created to explain the philosophy of a given activity.

Finally, the *Inside*



FROM PAGE 6

## Course Dovetails with CC, IEFA When Studying Literature

*Anna's Classroom* DVD (another production of the HeartLines Project) demonstrates real students using active literacy strategies with primary sources in small groups so teachers can see how these activities work in a classroom.

Each week in the course also includes a short video showing how the materials from that week can address the Common Core. Many materials will help teachers incorporate the advanced skills described in the Montana standards if they are used in ways that support students' thinking and communication skills, and these videos can help teachers think about all their materials in new ways.

In particular, as I've argued elsewhere, the Common Core standards partner seamlessly with the intent of Montana's Indian Education for All.

When we ask students to consider multiple perspectives, articulate the purposes and effects of certain treatments of history, or interpret the impact of culture on a novel's main character or setting, we are addressing both educational requirements.

The course is capped, for credit-earners, by the creation of a four-lesson unit plan that supports teachers' grade level and/or subject area, incorporates active pedagogy, and

makes use of HeartLines' materials. As a frequent provider of professional development, my goal is always for teachers to come away from the experience with something they can use right away. I want these units to meet the teachers' needs and to be vetted by not just a knowledgeable instructor, but by other teachers' opinions through a review process.

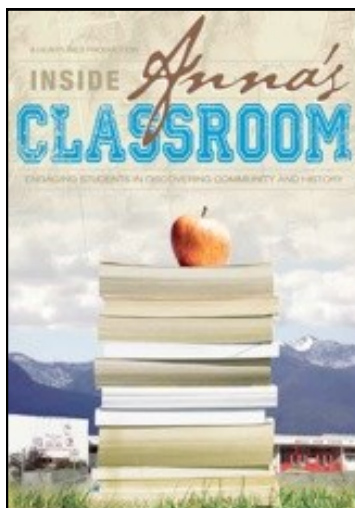
Summer HeartLines' participant Dan Ries, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Target Range, reflected on his experience in the course:

"Online learning gives a student the flexibility to complete the course on their own time. In particular HeartLines clued me in on so many sources for IEFA. The sources are out there, but it takes courses like these to help teachers brainstorm ideas and practices that are ready for implementation. Collaborating with other motivated teachers was also inspiring for my own practice."

This course, along with many others, will be offered again through MDPLN this fall, Oct. 6-Dec. 14. I recommend that anyone interested in trying an online course for the first time or those interested in branching out to a topic they might

not yet have considered, seek out a course through MDPLN (<http://www.mdpln.org/product?catalog=1398223211M8EWE>).

And you don't have to drive anywhere.



### COMMON CORE CONVERSATIONS

## Panel Discussion/'Continuing the Conversation' presented at Convention

**Caitlin Chiller**

This year at the MEA/AFT Conference, MATELA is offering a special panel discussion on Montana ELA Common Core State Standards.

Those interested in the current happening in areas of curricula, should be sure to attend "Demystifying Common Core State Standards" a four-person discussion with Beverly Chin, Anna Baldwin, Adam Mastandrea, and Jean O'Connor.

Teachers can ask from a broad panel of experts about the implementation and teaching of CCSS in their district.

Participants will have the chance to express their concerns, discuss what's working and not working, and distin-



guish myths from realities of CCSS in their classrooms and districts. Teachers are welcome to share their successes, concerns, and challenges with implementing CCSS in their subject areas.

The panel discussion will be Friday from 11 a.m. –12 p.m. in MCAD04.

After the panel on the Common Core, teachers can then head over to "Continuing the Conversation," which will offer a look at the realities of implementing these standards into daily practice. The conversation will be at 1 p.m. in MCHB01.

Teachers can come and discuss their successes, concerns, and challenges with implementing the common core into their disciplinary area.

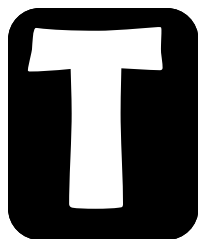
Between the panel discussion and continuing conversation, MATELA will hold its annual business meeting (with a free box lunch) in MCHB01. Everyone is invited to all three of these events.



## FIBONACCI INSPIRATION

## Explore Sequences, Patterns in Math,

By Sue Stolp



he cold winter day dawned, and the time had come for my dear old white Labrador retriever, Booker, to



make his final departure.

He had passed away the previous afternoon, and after a several-hour vigil and a night of sleep for me, he would now be transported to the canine crematorium.

As his delicate, shrouded body was forever gone, I sat down to create. Photos on my computer were cropped, enlarged, formatted, printed; red rubber stamp heart prints filled my datebook for the previous day; I took out my calligraphy pen and began to craft an ode to my beloved 13-and-a-half-year-old pet in a sketchbook writing journal.

By the next day, those words had morphed into a formatted poem using a syllabic structure I had been working on with my students. This creative process allowed me to begin this final grieving process for my departed companion.

**Snow  
fell  
gently  
beginning  
sometime that night as  
candles burned, spiriting life's force  
still connected to  
us unto  
a new  
safe  
home.**

Feeling inspired, I wrote two additional poems of a more lighthearted nature remembering Booker's funny, goofy self that I would share with my students the following day.

They all knew my dog was dying; but with kids' grief and loss often floating on the surface of their own lives, I did not want to pervade the room with sadness. My variety of examples also modeled different moods in writing.

**Head  
down,  
butt in  
the air, dirt  
flying skyward as  
subterranean rodents quake  
with fear and scurry  
away from  
Booker's  
fun  
game.**



**I'm  
so  
hungry  
for bacon  
and peanut butter  
but it seems that all they give me  
is this dry crunchy  
bland tasteless  
kibble.  
Poor  
me.**

The Fibonacci sequence of numbers, where each number in the series is generated by the sum of the two preceding numbers, is credited for being a blueprint for nature and often crops up in lessons connecting math and art.

Building squares clockwise around an original square of side length 1, so that each subsequent square's side length is the sum of the two preceding side lengths, yields the Fibonacci spiral.

Following the first and second squares, each of side length 1, come a square of side length 2, then 3, then 5, then 8, and so on, into infinity, depending on how large the piece of paper.

The spiral is formed by carefully drawing an arc that connects corner to corner of each square in a clockwise fashion.

Quarter-inch graph paper, colored pencils, and some careful planning are all that are needed to create the pattern and form the foundation for an engaging art/math/language arts creation.

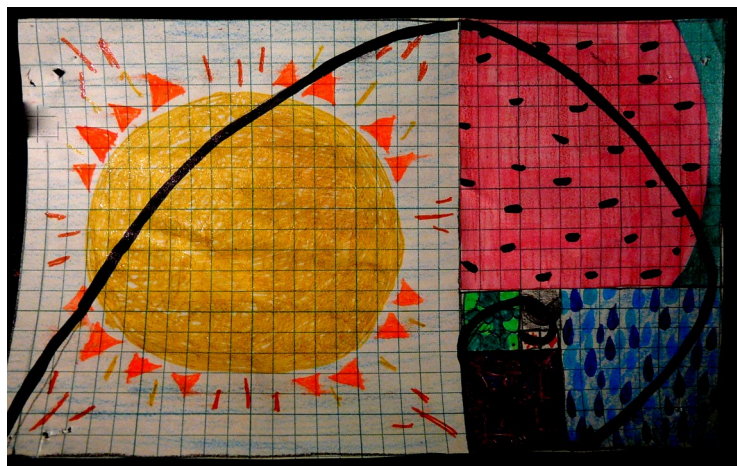
*Photos by Sue Stolp*



# Language, Art Interdisciplinary Unit

## Student Example of the Fibonacci Spiral

~ Meryl P.



The language-arts component is satisfied with the innovative Fibonacci Poetry, an idea for imaginative writing that I discovered in Jim and Deb Delisle's book *Building Strong Writers in the Middle School*, where poems are written following a specific syllabic structure. Note the examples I created for my students: The syllables of each line follow the Fibonacci sequence in an accordion-like, symmetrical format: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, 2, 1, 1.

The lines fold in and out to the largest line of eight syllables. Students were provided options regarding length of their pieces. Many used the structure I had modeled, but others opted to go further, with the longest line being thirteen syllables. Others decided to end at eight, with a series of 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8. I also offered the option of using the pattern to apply to numbers of words in each line, rather than numbers of syllables.

One of the AMLE (Association for Middle Level Education) teaching preparation standards is that "middle level teacher candidates assist all young adolescents in understanding the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge."

Combining mathematical patterns with language play caused students to ponder interdisciplinary connections and engaged students as they worked to fit their ideas for writing into the numerically generated structure. Many students wrote on themes of love and identity; others created light-hearted and whimsical pieces; several wrote about friendship, sports, and passionate pursuits.

Fibonacci poetry inspired my students to connect math, writing, and art to their inventive, growing selves.

## Student Fibonacci Samples

### An I-Phone

Next  
post  
Snapchat  
I am with  
others who are like  
me. Searching for light in the end  
of the boredom tunnel. One more post. Madness. Bandits.  
At twenty percent, the stupid  
box becomes a light  
crimson. Three  
percent.  
Phone.  
Dead.

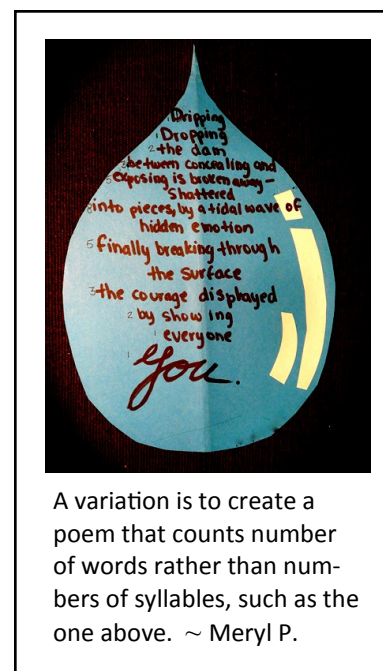
~ Beck T

When  
you  
write and  
try to be  
philosophical,  
talk in mysterious riddles.  
Think of the night sky,  
the crickets,  
the cold,  
wet  
rain.

~ Chelsea L.

I  
Love  
Christmas  
Red and green  
Gingerbread cookies  
Presents under the Christmas tree  
Singing house to house  
Big dinner  
Smiles  
And  
Joy

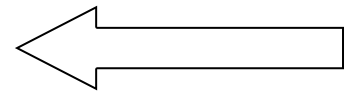
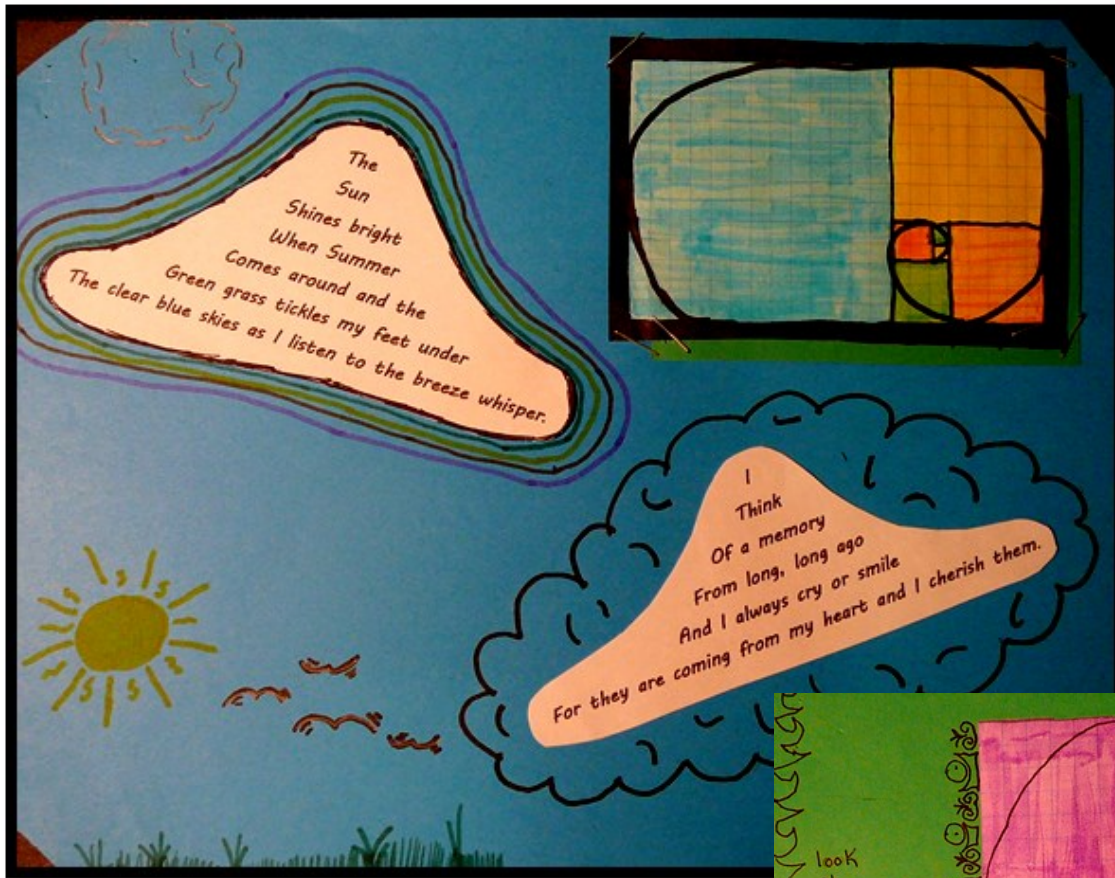
~ Jaycie P.



A variation is to create a poem that counts number of words rather than numbers of syllables, such as the one above. ~ Meryl P.

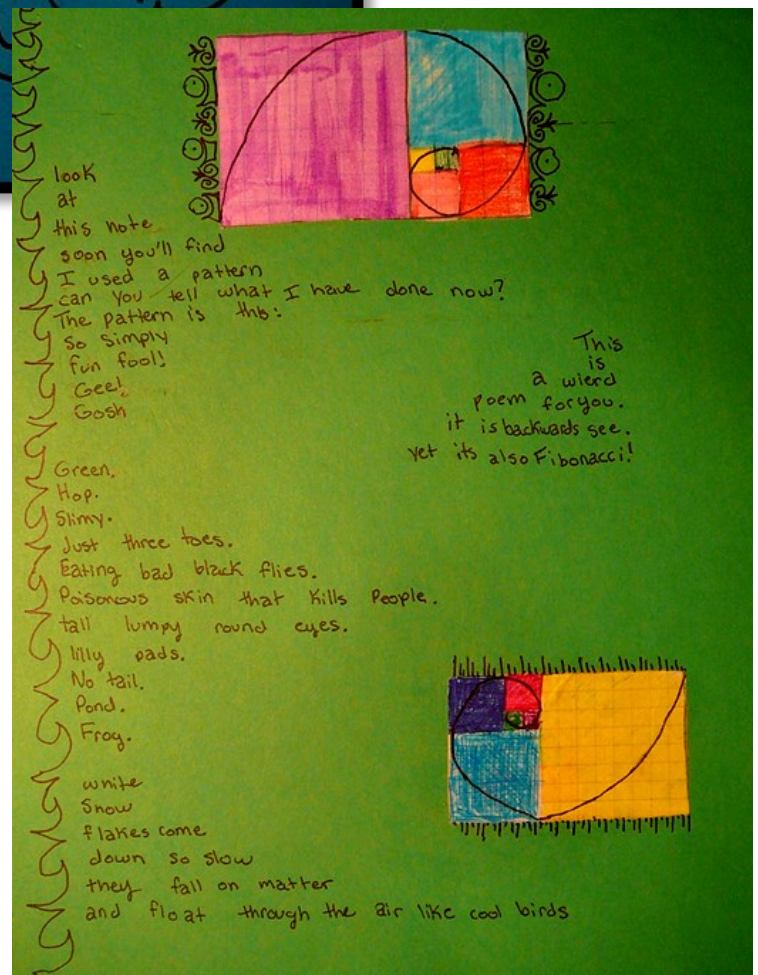
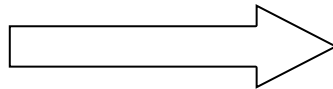
FROM PAGE 9

# STUDENT PROJECTS: Syllabic Structure Guides Poems



Poems and Artwork  
by Danica H.

Series  
by Mae S.



## Sources:

DeLisle, Jim and Deb DeLisle. (2011) *Building Strong Writers in Middle School*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

Kinsey, L. Christine and Teresa E. Moore. (2002). *Symmetry, Shape, and Space: An Introduction to Mathematics through Geometry*. Emeryville, CA: Key College Publishing.

## FEMALE 'LORD OF THE FLIES'

## Survival permeates 'Islands at the End of the World'

By Donna Miller



Justin Aslan's recent release (August 2014), *The Islands at the End of the World*, is a

survival story for young adults that would make either a good classic/contemporary pairing or a contemporary pick to replace an old classic.

Aslan didn't simply recycle the plot of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, but he did borrow some of the same ingredients so that he could contribute to the conversation about the fragility of civilization against the destructive force of fear.

In Golding's version, the main character, Jack, utilizes fear and the beast as propaganda in his tyranny. This fear not only prevents maintenance of the fire and construction of the huts but also hampers the boys' ability to make positive progress on the island, which has features of both paradise and hell.

Hunting for the beast becomes a fiction to justify short-term gratification rather than long-term goal setting.

Through its various conflicts and its setting, Golding seems to suggest a key theme: Although the structures and conventions of society (represented by the huts, fire, meetings, and the conch) confine or restrict the individual and/or free the individual from irrationality and disorder, fear is the ultimate enemy of civilization. Once afflicted with fear, mankind loses touch with humanity.

The beast in Aslan's novel, which is set in the idyllic Hawaiian Islands, is a geomagnetic event that interferes with Earth's magnetic field and robs society of the power gained through technological tools such as cell phones, electronic tablets, and other forms of communication: television and radio broadcasts.



And its savior figure, who plays the role of Golding's Simon, is 16-year-old Leilani Milton, a compassionate epileptic possessing uncanny abilities to communicate with the beyond. Like Simon, she determines that the beast, while horrible, is harmless.

Also analogous to the war in *Lord of the Flies*, the celestial anomaly sends the world into chaos. Dubbed by local newspapers as the *Emerald Orchid* because it resembles a Georgia O'Keeffe painting, a gaseous green haze has triggered tsunamis, zapped electronic communication, scrambled compass needles, and plunged the world into darkness, both literally and figuratively.

Trying to survive the chaos is Leliani, a *hapa* (half white) girl who grew up in the Bay Area of California, but three years ago, returned to her mother's homeland of Hawaii with her family. Despite her being half Hawaiian, Lei-

lani, whose name means Flower of Heaven, has struggled to fit in due to her fits: debilitating epileptic seizures.

*Titas* (bullies) at school make Leilani feel like a trespasser on the Big Island. When the geomagnetic event occurs, she and her father are stranded in Oahu, where Leilani was participating in a clinical drug trial. Unable to text, call, or return home, Leilani's mood oscillates between anger, sadness, numbness, fear, worry, and loneliness.

To pass the time and to allay her anxiety, Leilani reads indigenous stories about Hawaiian gods, goddesses, and a system of taboos. By reciting the old prayers and uttering traditional chants, she finds solace in the sacred connectedness of all living

things.

At home, Grandpa kept the old ways alive, telling Leilani that place is very strong but that family is stronger; now she has been robbed of both, and life continues to unravel.

When gasoline is no longer available to operate generators and as food grows scarce and the threat of acute radiation poisoning increases, the ensuing chaos gives rise to racial gangs, rogue law officials, military tyranny, and other forms of human barbarism. On its own meltdown, humanity

“By reciting the old prayers and uttering traditional chants, she (Leilani) finds solace in the sacred connectedness of all living things.”



From Page 11

## ISLANDS: Old Ways Become Key to Survival for Heroine

### *Young Woman, Grandfather Brave Tortuous Journey to Return Home to Family*

spirals deeper into the pit of ignorance. Leilani realizes she may never go to prom, pass a driver's test, go to college, or have a boyfriend. She may never backpack in Europe, have another ice shave (a type of sno cone), or refill her seizure medication.

Desperate and disconnected, Leilani feels like a common beach plant in Hawaii with a legend behind its unique appearance, the *naupaka*—torn in two and incomplete. She must get home to her family!

However, the journey is torturous. While death-marching through a gorgeous hell, Leilani and her father are “exhausted and in pain and homesick and hunted and hungry and chafing and swarmed by mosquitoes and thirsty and infected and angry and half-crazed” (Aslan, 266).

They have been hunted, attacked, shipwrecked, shot, and held prisoner. Amidst the agony, Leilani receives assistance from the handsome Aukina and the sage Akoni. From the latter, a wise healer, she learns not only about the power of listening but that “what we say and do to each other is the clearest sign of God's presence in our hearts” (227).

When energy levels plummet and hope tumbles, Leilani calls upon her guardian spirit, Pele, the goddess of lightning to help her endure and to help her determine the identity and purpose of the Emerald Orchid's earthly visit.

Earth's survival depends on Leilani's ability to solve the mystery of the “green cloud,” but Leilani's survival is threatened by man's inhumanity, nature's indifference, and her seizures with their erratic, protracted, and altered features.

At first, she disregards the voices she hears, attributing them to increased stress and an overactive imagination. Then, she discovers her gift.

Because *The Islands at the End of the World* incorporates issues of exceptionality (Leilani's epilepsy) as well as other issues that define culture—class, language, age, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, and geography, it qualifies as cultural identity literature (CIL) and would make an ideal addition to reading lists.

In an earlier article on the topic of CIL, I wrote, “As cultural markers, these factors shape one's identity, and literature courses embrace greater diversity when they represent each aspect” (Miller, 32). As CIL, this novel works at dispelling some of the myths and misperceptions about diverse cultures.

Through the readers' attachment to Leilani and her fight for survival, we see through the eyes of a young Hawaiian woman who believes that human survival depends on remembering the myths, legends, and old ways. Leilani also recognizes that our humanity rests in the capacity to make value judgments, to listen, and to consider that knowledge comes from many sources.

After all, knowledge provides an antidote to fear, and violence often traces back to fear.

Adolescents often connect with novels like Aslan's because they identify with characters comparable in age who live lives parallel to their own and who struggle with similar conflicts and issues: disconnection and search for belonging, cultural identity, family and/or social dis-

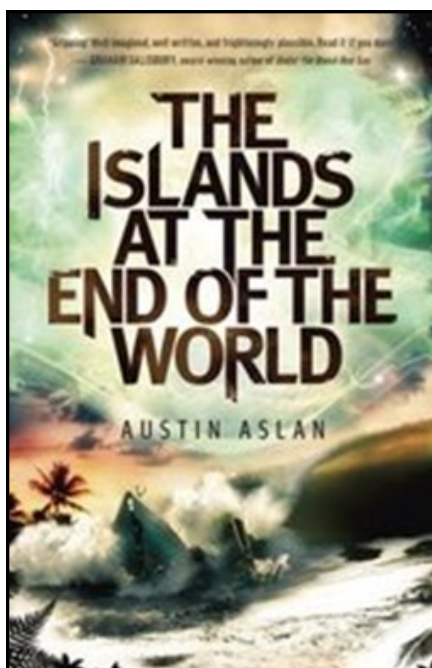
cord, bullies, and overcoming perceived limitations.

With all of its power and potential, I recommend *The Islands at the End of the World* as a classroom pick. Reading this example of CIL, teachers will discover its parallels and possibilities!

#### Works Cited

Aslan, Austin. *The Islands at the End of the World*. New York: Random House, 2014.

Miller, Donna L. “Building Bridges with Cultural Identity Literature.” *The ALAN Review*, 41.3 (Summer 2014): 31-38.



# Thirteen Ways to Look at a Board Meeting

By Curt Bobbitt

The MATELA board meeting was an open book with chapters looking back on the association's history and forward to the MEA/MFT Conference and campaigns for qualifying for affiliate awards from NCTE. The meeting was held on the University of Great Falls Campus Sept. 6.

The board recognized Dawn Sievers of Power School as the 2014 Distinguished Educator. The nomination listed Sievers' 18-year history of instructional competence, influence beyond her classroom, and leadership in professional organizations.

Sievers teaches English, Spanish, and art. In addition to helping her students display their work in local art venues and *Signatures from Big Sky*, she creates her own, including works in the annual Paris Gibson Square auction and the Montana State Fair. She will receive the award officially at MATELA's business meeting.

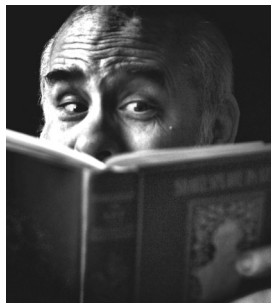
The board spent your money in several responsible ways. It funded a local membership function grant to co-sponsor a roundtable book discussion Oct. 28 in conjunction with the University of Montana's Mansfield Library's exhibit, "Fighting the Fires of Hate" (see page 3).

The board also awarded a professional development grant to Brenda Lamb to support her trip to the NCTE Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., in November. She will write an article for a future issue of *Update*.

The board grants financial support each year for a member to serve as MATELA's director at the NCTE Annual Convention. This year Curt Bobbitt will fulfill that responsibility, attending the Business Meeting and attending all sections of the Standing Committee on Affiliates, including the Roundtable Breakfast.

In addition to finalizing plans for the Educators' Conference in Missoula in October (pages 1-3), members touted upcoming opportunities for members. Anna Baldwin will offer her HeartLines online course this fall via the Montana Digital Professional Development Network (<http://www.MDPLN.org>)—article on pages 4, 6-7.

The Festival of the Book will take place in Missoula, Oct. 9-11 thanks to Humanities Montana. Jeff Ross described



Dawn Sievers

his formation of the Belt Valley Shakespeare Players, its purpose "to recruit actors from other local high schools so we can become a more regional organization."

The board began its campaign to qualify for four NCTE affiliate awards this year. Individual members will remind those directly involved of the criteria and draft applications in June. Curt Bobbitt will oversee the affiliate excellence progress.

Brenda Lamb will monitor progress toward membership recognition. A volunteer will spearhead maintenance and development of the website and keep everyone on track for the multi-cultural program credit. The board will ask Jessica Jones to help make *Update* a winning entry this year.

Finally, Curt Bobbitt reported progress toward the MATELA history project. He displayed tables showing highlights, conference topics and speakers, and officers by decades. He also cross-referenced the digital archive of all the issues of *Update* he was able to scan: <http://issuu.com/matelamt>. The oldest issue is from spring 1978, so anyone holding older issues might contact him.

Does that coverage total 13? If the count falls short, board members will supply the rest at the annual business meeting at noon, Oct. 17, at Missoula College.



Brenda Lamb



**THE BOARD MEETS:** (clockwise, from lower left) Brenda Lamb, Kelsey, Kate Will-Duyak, Joyce Herbeck, Curt Bobbitt, Caitlin Chiller, Beverly Chin, Jeff Ross, Adam Mastandrea.

## Montanans Present at November NCTE Annual Convention

Several colleagues from Montana will present sessions, lead roundtables, respond to or chair sessions at the NCTE Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., Nov, 22-23.

The NCTE site provides the full schedule and a convention planner ([http://center.uoregon.edu/NCTE/2014AnnualConvention/program/program\\_search.php](http://center.uoregon.edu/NCTE/2014AnnualConvention/program/program_search.php)).

All presenters deserve congratulations for the knowledge, effort, and skill necessary to qualify.

**Heather Bruce** (University of Montana), speaker  
“STORIES FOR JUSTICE: PEDAGOGIES, IDENTITIES, AND ADVOCACY THROUGH NARRATIVE”

**Beverly Chin** (University of Montana), speaker  
“READ LIKE A WRITER, WRITE LIKE A READER”

**Jess Gallo** (University of Montana), chair  
“INCORPORATE, PARTICIPATE, TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHER EDUCATION”  
“THE 2014 ORBIS PICTUS AWARD BOOKS: USING NONFICTION STORIES WITH CHILDREN”

**Beth Keyser** (Superior Junior High), speaker  
“THE STORY OF LANGUAGE: INTEGRATING LINGUISTICS INTO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSROOMS”

**Hali Kirby** (Gardiner High School), speaker  
“WHATEVER CATCHES MY ATTENTION, I DO: TEACHER STORIES AND THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES IN RURAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS”

**Casey Olsen** (Columbus High School), speaker  
“WRITING IN THE LANDSCAPE TO CRAFT STORIES OF KNOWING: THE WRITING MARATHON”

**Casey Olsen** (Columbus High School), speaker  
STORIES FOR JUSTICE: PEDAGOGIES, IDENTITIES, AND ADVOCACY THROUGH NARRATIVE”

**Kathryn Osgood** (Bigfork Elementary), speaker,  
“STORY AS THE GREAT EQUALIZER: TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF CULTURE CIRCLES”

**Amy Ratto Parks** (Montana State University), speaker  
“TELLING RHETORICAL STORIES AND LITERACY NARRATIVES: THE COMPOSITION PROCESS, MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION, AND MULTILINGUAL WRITERS”

**Rob Petrone** (Montana State University), speaker  
“HIGH SCHOOL MATTERS”

**Rob Petrone** (Montana State University), speaker  
“A NEW LITERARY LENS ON THE HORIZON: READING STORIES OF ADOLESCENCE THROUGH A YOUTH LENS”

**Jim Thompson** (Bozeman High School), speaker and chair  
“JAZZ IT UP, OLD SPORT! INTERDISCIPLINARY CO-TEACHING WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS”

**Nigel Waterton** (Montana State University), respondent,  
“THE FUTURE IS NOW: EXPLORING 21ST CENTURY TEACHING IDEAS WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS”

**Allison Wynhoff-Olsen** (Montana State University), roundtable leader  
“RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE 4---RESEARCH FOCUSED ON METHODS AND MATERIALS”

**Allison Wynhoff-Olsen** (Montana State University), chair  
“LAYERS OF LITERACY: USING THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE OF LITERACY NARRATIVES IN ONGOING REFLECTIVE CLASSROOM CONVERSATION”

**Allison Wynhoff-Olsen** (Montana State University), speaker  
“(RE)CONSTRUCTING RATIONALITY IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING”

**Allison Wynhoff-Olsen** (Montana State University), roundtable leader  
“THE CONVERSATION IS STILL HAPPENING: INTEGRATING COMMON CORE IN YOUR CLASSROOM PRACTICES”

**Allison Wynhoff-Olsen** (Montana State University), speaker,  
“ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING AS SOCIAL ACTION IN CLASSROOM CONTEXTS”



# Current MATELA Board and Organization Liaisons

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## MATELA Membership Form for 2013-2014

Please join/renew by filling out this form, making out a check, and mailing both to MATELA's treasurer at the address on the bottom of this form. Our membership year begins Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street/Box \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

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Student membership: \$10 \_\_\_\_

Retired membership: \$10 \_\_\_\_

Regular yearly membership: \$25 \_\_\_\_

Special 3-year membership: \$65 \_\_\_\_

New member: \_\_\_\_

Renewal: \_\_\_\_

**Mail your check and this form to:**  
Dawn Sievers, MATELA Treasurer  
PO Box 402, Vaughn, MT 59487

# **Please consider sharing your talent and expertise with MATELA!**

## **Upcoming publication deadlines:**

Winter UPDATE: Dec. 1  
Spring UPDATE: March 1  
MEJ 2015: June 1  
Fall UPDATE: Sept. 1

**Send Submissions to: Curt Bobbitt [cbobbitt@ugf.edu](mailto:cbobbitt@ugf.edu)**

All submissions must be in .rtf or .doc format, no columns or extra spaces between paragraphs, and without embedded graphics or photos. Please send graphics as attachments. Include a by-line with your name the way you would like it to appear at the beginning of your copy.



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