

A newsletter of the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts
www.matelamt.com

TEACHER WORKSHOPS OFFERED

UM Hosts Shakespeare's First Folio in May

Press Release University of Montana– Missoula

The University of Montana has been selected as Montana's host site for "First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare," a national traveling exhibition of one of the world's most treasured books – the Shakespeare *First Folio*.

The Folger Shakespeare Library, in partnership with Cincinnati Museum Center and the American Library Association, is touring the exhibition to all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico in 2016. Final touring dates will be announced in April.

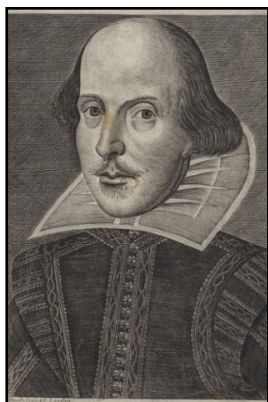
"Each state will host a copy of the folio, and I am proud that we get to represent Montana," said Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library Associate Professor Julie Biando Edwards. "We have a wonderful campus and community partnerships. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Montana, and I am so pleased to be a part of it."



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Julie Biando Edwards

The Mansfield Library and Montana Museum of Art & Culture submitted the application to bring the *First Folio* to campus, and will partner to make it a valuable experience for the community.



William Shakespeare

While the library will lead organizing and implementing numerous programs for University students, adults, children, teachers and families, the MMAC will display the folio and other related panels in their galleries, support the environmental and security requirements and provide public access free of charge. The museum also will curate a related exhibit, extending its hours to accommodate as many visitors as possible.

"Exhibiting the Shakespeare *First Folio* is a high honor," MMAC Director Barbara Koostra said. "MMAC is delighted to

partner with the Mansfield Library to bring this rare object to the University of Montana campus and the region, and we hope it inspires everyone."

Many of Shakespeare's plays, which were written to be performed, were not published during his lifetime. The *First Folio* is the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays. It was published in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death. Two of Shakespeare's fellow actors compiled 36 of his plays, hoping to preserve them for future generations. Without it, we would not have 18 of Shakespeare's plays, including "Macbeth," "Julius Caesar," "Twelfth Night," "The Tempest," "Antony and Cleopatra," "The Comedy of Errors" and "As You Like It."

When the *First Folio* arrives in Missoula, its pages will be opened to Shakespeare's most quoted line: "To be or not to be." Those words were written in "Hamlet." Accompanying the rare book will be a multi-panel exhibition exploring the significance of Shakespeare,

then and now, with additional digital content and interactive activities.

The Folger Shakespeare Library holds 82 copies of the *First Folio*, by far the largest collection in the world and more than a third of the 233 known copies. It is believed that 750 copies originally were printed.

See Full Schedule of Events PP 12-13, including a free teacher workshop, May 21.

INSIDE This Issue:

- NCTE Proposals Due: P 3-4
- Visual Arts and Literacy: P 19
- Shakespeare Events PP 12-13
- Board Meeting Agenda P 23



ALAN ANNOUNCES GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Grants Offered for Librarians, Graduate Students to Attend ALAN

by **DONNA MILLER**

The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN) Executive Committee approved the creation of two new grants—the Cart/Campbell Grant for librarians and the Smith/Carlsen Grant for graduate students—and announced them at the 2015 ALAN Workshop in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Nov. 23-24.

To fund these grants, ALAN, which promotes communication and cooperation among all individuals who have a special interest in adolescent literature, is encouraging donations.

At the end of 2014, the ALAN Executive Committee authorized the formation of an ad hoc committee to discuss the creation of two new ALAN grants, a process set in



motion by CJ Bott, a former ALAN President who received a \$50 donation at the conclusion of the 2014 ALAN Workshop in Washington, DC.

Bott matched the donation and envisioned an account that could be used to defray someone's expenses in attending

ALAN: "a first timer or a middle school or high school teacher, librarian, or high school student from the city hosting the event, or even a board member whose circumstances do not provide funding."

Bott claimed to need help in finding these "ors."

For nearly a year, the ad hoc ALAN committee worked on the creation of these two projects, determining whether the donated funds could be seed money for

permanent grants that would benefit specific populations of Young Adult Literature (YAL) professionals.

According to the November 2015 Report and Request from an ALAN Ad Hoc Committee on New Grants, these grants would provide financial support to allow first-time attendees or other eligible applicants/members to attend the ALAN Workshop.

To derive names for the potential grants, committee members studied ALAN's history. The Cart/Campbell Grant for librarians honors the work of Young Adult (YA) librarians Michael Cart and Patricia J. Campbell, while the Smith/Carlsen Grant for graduate students honors the work of YAL scholars Dora V. Smith and G. Robert Carlsen.

ALAN has prepared a contribution form to be used by donors interested in contributing to one or both of these grant programs. (See below.)

CART/CAMPBELL and SMITH/CARLSEN ALAN GRANT Donation Form

Thank you for your donation to the CART/CAMPBELL or SMITH/GRANT FUND. Your contribution helps a public or school librarian who works with teens or graduate student in English Education, Literacy Education, or other field connected to young adult literature attend the ALAN conference.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount for CART/CAMPBELL: _____ Amount for SMITH/CARLSEN: _____

TOTAL: _____

Please make check payable to ALAN and indicate in "memo" the amount for Cart/Campbell and/or Smith/Carlsen.

Credit Card: Visa MasterCard Discover AMEX

Name on card: _____

Card Number: _____

Billing address: _____

Billing zip code: _____

Expiration Date (Mo/Yr): _____

Security Code (3 digits on back or 4 digits on front AMEX) _____

Signature: _____

Mail to: **ALAN, PO Box 234, Campbell, OH 44405-0234 ATTN: Grants**

NCTE Presentation Advocates for Inclusion of LGBT Literature

Donna Bulatowicz, Dr. Rachael Waller, and Dr. Cindy Dell presented “Expanding the Possibilities: Inclusion of LGBT Literature in K-12 Schools” at the NCTE conference Nov. 20.

The presentation covered the importance of children seeing themselves and others represented in literature (mirrors, windows, and doors), as well as shared the results of a study looking at inclusion of diverse literature in a school library, a survey of teachers about diverse literature used in classrooms, and a focus group of parents who discussed the books their children read and their thoughts on reading books with diverse characters.

The presentation also included recommendations for teachers and a list of books with LGBT and/or gender nonconforming characters that won 2015 book awards and honors.

Waller is an assistant professor in reading and Dell is an assistant professor in education foundations in the College of Education at MSU-Billings. Bulatowicz is in the Ph.D. program in education at MSU-Bozeman.



Photo by Sue Stolp

Donna Bulatowicz, Cindy Dell, Rachael Waller present on character diversity in children’s literature during the NCTE conference.

Get a Team; Create a Proposal for NCTE 2016 in Atlanta; Due Jan. 13

The call for proposals for the 2016 NCTE Annual Convention (Atlanta) appears at <http://www.ncte.org/annual/call-2016>. The deadline for submission is Jan. 13.

General Information from the website:
<http://www.ncte.org/annual/call-2016>:

To promote the participation of newcomers to the profession, NCTE wishes to include early-career teachers in as many sessions as possible. Please check the “Early Career” box beside the name of any individual who has taught fewer than five years.

To promote the participation of urban teachers, program planners find it helpful when the students and teachers considered in a session are from public school districts in large cities. If the content is especially attentive to the interests of teachers and students in big cities, please check the “Urban Teacher” box beside the presenter’s name.

To promote new involvement by people from historically under-represented groups, NCTE’s Conference on English Education invites applications for CEE Geneva Smitherman Cultural Diversity grants to help defray the costs of travel and registration for the NCTE Convention. Applicants should check the “CEE Geneva Smitherman Cultural Diversity Grant” box on the proposal form and visit the [website](http://www.ncte.org/annual/call-2016) to submit an application. The application deadline is Monday, May 23, 2016.

To promote involvement of two-year college faculty, we encourage proposals that explore the unique learning environment of the community college.

Topics of Emphasis are used by the planning committee and are searchable in the online program.

- Advocacy
- Argumentation
- Assessment
- Community/Public Literacy
- Content Area Literacies/Writing across the Curriculum
- Composition/Writing
- Digital and Media Literacies
- Early Literacies
- Equity and Social Justice
- Informational Text
- Literature
- Multilingualism
- Narrative
- Oral Language
- Reading
- Rhetoric
- Teacher Education/PD

Proposals designed to advertise or disseminate information about books, materials, or services for sale will not be accepted.

In order to include as many members as possible on the program, NCTE policy limits each participant to one extended speaking appearance per convention. The program chair may drop multiply submitting speakers from all but one extended speaking role, which may result in sessions being excluded. The following do NOT count as extended speaking roles: session chairs, respondents, roundtable discussants/facilitators.

All speakers are required to pay registration fees for the convention. Speakers are encouraged to be members of NCTE. NCTE does not reimburse program speakers for travel or hotel expenses.

Session proposers should advise all involved in their proposal that submission of a proposal does not constitute an invitation to appear on the program. Individual invitations are sent in late spring following the planning committee’s review meeting.

Trade book authors who require funding from their publishers to appear on the program must secure that support prior to the proposal deadline.

Sessions are accepted with the expectation that the presenters listed will present at the Convention; changes to the presenter list after acceptance may result in the session being removed from the program.

Presenters will not be listed in the Program (including the online program) until NCTE receives payment or proof of payment request for registration. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Reflections on NCTE: Differences Are Not Walls

By **CHRISTY
MOCK-
STUTZ**

I have only been to a handful of national literacy conferences over the years, and NCTE 2015 was the best large-conference experience I have had.



What exactly made it so successful? It could have been the sentiment that everyone attending the conference seemed to share, that differences are not walls.

Without fail, every teacher, pre-service teacher, professor, or administrator I met was not only ready to *talk* about their ideas, but to *listen* to others' ideas and find common areas of collaboration among differences.

Maybe part of the successful feeling was the fact that Montana teachers were so well-represented in presentations and awards. Dr. Beverly Chin, chair of the English Department and Director of the English Teaching Program from the University of Montana, was awarded the prestigious *Richard W. Halle Award for Outstanding Middle Level Educator*.

Perhaps, it felt so successful because of the energy, enthusiasm, and excellent pedagogical knowledge that students from various Montana Universities exhibited during panel and roundtable discussions of their research projects. All of these events and honors demonstrate the incredible richness and quality of teachers here in Montana.

Other common threads emerged during the conference workshops and activities. The first was community-building. I was thrilled to connect with other state-level English language arts leaders.

We are now in the midst of forming an ad-hoc state-level leadership group to communicate with each other about the balance of educational policy and curriculum that is unique to our positions.

In addition, it was wonderful to meet so many of the existing and potential teacher-leaders from Montana at this national convention.

There is an energy and commitment to bridging the vast physical distances between teachers in Montana by creating



Photo by Christy Mock-Stutz

Dr. Beverly Chin accepts her award: The Richard W. Halle Award for Outstanding Middle Level Educator at the NCTE Convention in November.

Professional Learning Communities to help our teachers grow and share resources.

Building collaboration is key to building teachers as leaders in their schools and communities, and NCTE 2015 provided the perfect platform for connecting with other English Language Arts educators in order to build leadership networks.

Throughout the Common Core ELA standards, research plays a major role. Grappling with research can be intimidating, but a

dynamic workshop I attended addresses this issue from a new perspective.

The Grassroots Writing Research (<http://isuwriting.com>) project provides resources for teachers to instruct their students how to be writing researchers.

Different from simply researching for content, students are encouraged to research the way writers write. Integrating research seamlessly into the daily curriculum allows time for students to research different genres of writing for a specific purpose.

Instead of a teacher locating and providing a "model" for students to use, students gather their own models of writing that will help inform them how to write their final writing piece.

This approach demands that students not only conduct research, but also carefully analyze the writing samples and determine what is successful (or not) in the samples.

Overall, the 2015 NCTE was a reminder that *differences are not walls* and collaboration is the key to successful educational practices within the classroom, schools and greater community.

It is important for Montana teachers to meet with teachers from other states and share the great things we are doing here in Montana, as well as collaborate and build communities with other states.

“Instead of a teacher locating and providing a “model” for students to use, students gather their own models of writing that will help inform them how to write their final writing piece.”

Chin Named Outstanding Middle-Level Educator

NCTE Press Release

Beverly Chin is the recipient of the 2015 NCTE Richard W. Halle Award for Outstanding Middle Level Educator. This award honors a junior high/middle level educator who has worked to promote understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents.

Chin is chair of the English Department and director of the English Teaching Program at the University of Montana-Missoula and former director of the Montana Writing Project. She has more than 35 years of experience as an English language arts teacher, adult education instructor, and teacher educator and consults nationally and internationally on English language arts standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Chin has written articles and books on the teaching of reading and writing including *On Your Own: Writing* (Prentice Hall, 1990) and *On Your Own: Grammar* (Prentice Hall, 1991).

In addition, she has served as senior series consultant for William H. Sadlier's *Grammar for Writing*, grades 6–12 (2014), *Grammar Workshop*, grades 3–5 (2013), and *Writing Workshop*, grades 6–12 (2009) program consultant for Glencoe Literature (2007) lead content advisor for *Teaching Multicultural Literature: A Workshop for the Middle Grades* (Annenberg Media, 2005) literary scholar and teacher educator expert for *The Expanding Canon: Teaching Multicultural Literature in High School*, among others.

Involved with NCTE for many years, Chin is a past president (1996), former member of the Middle Level Section Steering Committee, past secretary of the Conference on English Education, and Member-at-Large of the Conference on English Leadership.

She is also a former board member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and served as the senior project consultant for the 2011 Writing Framework for National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Chin is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2012 NCTE Distinguished Service Award, the 2005 NCTE Rewey Belle Inglis Award for Outstanding Woman in English Education.



Photo by S. Reece

Beverly Chin with her award, surrounded by MATELA members with Richard W. Halle behind her.

Dr. Beverly Ann Chin (University of Montana) and Leanne Deschamps (University of Montana and Florence-Carlton Middle School) embraced the opportunity to present in Minneapolis at the November NCTE annual convention.

Chin and Deschamps collaborated with teachers from Wyoming and Ohio to present a session entitled "Looking Within and Reaching Beyond: Persuasive Writing in and beyond the Classroom." Participants explored strategies to help students engage in effective communication to empower them in their academic and civic lives. The session focused on the complexity of identifying stance, analyzing audience, and selecting appropriate vocabulary for persuasive writing.



Photo courtesy Sue Stolp

Sue Stolp, Joyce Herbeck, and Donna Bulatowicz enjoy a meal at Hell's Kitchen Minneapolis, known for its music and rice porridge.



Photo by Christy Mock-Stutz

MSU students (pre-service teachers) presenting at a roundtable discussion during NCTE November in Minneapolis.

NCTE CREATES NEW RESOLUTIONS

Student Data, Security, School-to-Prison Topics Outlined

Student Privacy Issues Become More Complex in Digital Age of Tracking, Monitoring

NCTE PRESS RELEASE

In 1995, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) issued the Resolution on Electronic Online Services in support of making online resources available to students.

In 1998, NCTE issued the Resolution on Testing and Equitable Treatment of Students in support of students' well-being in assessment development and administration.

In today's digital age, the definition of privacy rights has shifted. As Congress considers major revisions to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and related legislation, educators are coming to understand the complexity of students' right to privacy—in and out of school. As students are tracked, traced, monitored, and scored with more intensity than ever, educators must remain informed advocates for their students' privacy, security, and safety.

Thus, we must work collaboratively to ensure that privacy rights and data safeguards are enacted to protect students and families in schools, colleges, and universities.

In spite of legal provisions, various publishing and assessment companies have released test results carelessly. It is the responsibility of education and state agencies that enter into assessment contracts to ensure the security of student records and assure schools and communities that they have done so. It is also important for educators to determine how student data should be used in an ethical, lawful, and responsible manner.

Likewise, it is the ethical responsibility of private assessment companies to protect student data.

Resolution

In light of recent breaches of student data, we can no longer ignore the urgency to advocate for students' privacy rights and security which are vital to the integrity of literacy education. Be it therefore resolved that the National Council of Teachers of English

- affirm students' right to educational data privacy;
- advocate for security of student data that reflects ethical, lawful,

and responsible treatment in a digital age;

- raise awareness of legislation regarding students' data privacy and security; and
- support families, communities, and educators as they work to strengthen privacy, security, and safety of student data.
- (over)

Resolution on Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Background

The School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) is an injurious yet growing system of institutional inequity that funnels young people from schools to prisons. As part of the crisis of mass incarceration, STPP is a dimension of Jim Crow, redesigned. It is a disturbing national trend wherein children are policed out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems, an increasing percentage of which are privatized.

Many of these children are cognitively atypical or endure histories of poverty, abuse, neglect, and/or trauma. Such students would benefit from additional educational and counseling services instead of the current practice of isolation, penalization, and suspension/expulsion.

Alternately, some students are forced into this pipeline without cause—simply for being socially and culturally different.

When combined with zero-tolerance policies, educators' decisions to refer students for discipline might lead to harsh and enduring punishment, contributing to extremely high dropout and

"pushout" rates. Such students are much more likely to be introduced into the criminal justice system.

Who Is in the Pipeline?

Racial minorities and children with atypical abilities are disproportionately represented in STPP. According to a nationwide study by the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights,

African American students are 3.5 times more likely than their White classmates to be suspended or expelled. Black children constitute 18 percent of students, but they account for 46 percent of those suspended more than once.

For students with atypical abilities, the numbers are equally troubling. One report found that while 8.6 percent of public school children have been identified as atypical, these students make up

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See RESOLUTIONS P. 7

MATELA Earns Membership Recruitment Award

NCTE Press Release

M

ontana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts has been named one of 10 winners of the 2015 Kent D. Williamson Affiliate Membership Recruitment Award given by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

MATELA was able to substantially increase its membership this past year by more than 29.4%, enough to garner attention for the award.

Established in 1987, this award recognizes NCTE affiliates that have increased their memberships over the past year. Awards are calculated as a percentage of increase based on membership lists submitted by the affiliates.

Other winners this year include California Association of Teachers of English, Colorado Language Arts Society, Illinois Association of Teachers of English, Iowa Council of Teachers of English, Kentucky Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, Oregon Council of Teachers of English, Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, and Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts.

The award winners will be announced at the 2015 NCTE Annual Convention in Minneapolis, during the Affiliate Roundtable Breakfast on Sunday, November 22.

For more information about the Kent D. Williamson Affiliate Membership Recruitment Award, see <http://www.ncte.org/affiliates/awards/membership>.

Contact: Millie Davis, 217-278-3634, mdavis@ncte.org.

The National Council of Teachers of English, with 30,000 individual and institutional members worldwide, is dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education. For more information, visit www.ncte.org.



Photo by Steve Hubbard.

MATELA Past President Curt Bobbitt presents the Kent D. Williamson Affiliate Membership Recruitment award to Secretary Sue Stolp at the NCTE National Convention in Minneapolis in November.

ON AFFILIATES AND ADVOCACY

Stolp Acts as Affiliate Director for NCTE

by Sue Stolp

Teachers in the state of Montana, across the United States of America, advocate for their students every day.

As a middle-school teacher in Bozeman, I have been an advocate for many individuals with a variety of backgrounds and needs, depending on who was entrusted to my care: ELL students who required an alternative math class; gifted-and-talented students, who deserved opportunities for challenge; a dyslexic student who benefited from speech dictation to write papers.

Now, as a teacher mentor for Bozeman Public Schools, I am a committed advocate for new teachers, supporting them in any way they need: My work with teachers is entirely teacher-driven; while I have my own ideas on ways to support each individual, his or her immediate needs come first.

At the recent NCTE Annual Convention in Minneapolis, MATELA provided me the opportunity to act as affiliate director; as a result of the sessions I attended, I have come away with an even greater sense of what it means to be an advocate.

As 2016 program chair and president of NCTE, Susan Houser has championed advocacy as her cause, naming "Faces of Advocacy" as the conference theme. In her call for program proposals, Houser requests sessions to be intentionally directed toward advocacy and the implementation of change.

The many faces of advocacy include teachers advocating for themselves and other teachers, our profession, our well-being and health, our students, literacy and learning, and social change.

Please consider submitting a proposal. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. PST, Jan. 13. Proposals may be submitted online at <http://bit.ly/call-2016>. See the NCTE website for more information.

Affiliate Leaders' Meeting

Curt Bobbitt and I attended the affiliate leaders' meeting, representing MATELA within Region 7 of NCTE. Two guiding questions led to enlightened discussion among the representatives from our region:

In particular, I was inspired by the efforts of educators from British Columbia, who are making efforts to change curriculum to be more responsive to the needs of their aboriginal students. Sara Davidson is a graduate



student who is conducting research on writing personal narratives with indigenous students; she lives on Haida Gwaii, formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, an archipelago on the North Coast of British Columbia, half of the population of which is the indigenous Haida people.

Davidson has also conducted research into what happens when something is mandated, such as a required course for teachers in indigenous languages prior to certification.

Her plight draws parallels to the resistance that often occurs in Montana in regard to Indian Education for All, and we spoke about the possibility of a combined effort within the affiliate to draw attention to how these situations could be reconciled within different parts of the region.

On a further note, Bobbitt posed the question about the affiliate's role in provincial and/or national politics in terms of support of or resistance to a policy.

Ashley Cail, from Kelowna, British Columbia, a young teacher with a passion for inquiry and critical thinking, also attended the affiliates' meeting. She and Davidson were two of three authors who penned "Starting a Circle: Exploring Aboriginal Education" in their affiliate journal *English Practice*, vol. 57, no 1, 2015.

The article is available online. Again, the parallel was drawn for Bobbitt and me between the work of these B.C. educators and Dottie Susag's recent article about *Birthright* in our recent *Montana English Journal*. Both publications emphasize the importance of poetry to life.

Policy Advocacy Session

The U.S. Department of Education's mission statement is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness, a statement that caused much consternation among a group of educators that was brought together by invitation for a special session with NCTE Interim Executive Director Barbara Cambridge and the 2015 Teaching Ambassador Fellow, Meredith Morelle. Morelle, a former Maryland teacher and instructional coach, holds a graduate degree in human rights studies from Columbia as well as passionate interests in anti-racist education and social justice.

While we were first prompted to discuss what was going well in terms of the mission statement, the discussion about the challenges faced generated more honest dialogue within the group of about 20 educators: college professors, public school educators, doctoral students, and policy advocates. Bobbitt and I were fortunate enough to be invited to this session.

One critical issue addressed was

"In particular, I was inspired by the efforts of educators from British Columbia, who are making efforts to change curriculum to be more responsive to the needs of their aboriginal students."

See **AFFILIATES** Page 20

AFFILIATES from PAGE. 8

Student Resolutions Passed; Round Table Breakfast Features Teacher of Year

that of standardized testing: Testing sets up student identities, is harmful, and disproportionately impacts non-whites to a negative degree.

Many school administrators are driven by fear—fear of swaying from the federal mandates that dictate curricular emphases and fear over the pressure to provide data in the form of test scores that represents learning.

On a personal level I was struck by how little the Department of Education's mission statement reflects the most important things teachers do in the classroom; classrooms are full of students who may never achieve at a high level or compete in a global market, but they need emotional support, guidance, and skills to survive in a complicated world.

Students are not data points to be spoken about in terms of numbers and test scores; to do so is demeaning and dehumanizing.

2016-17 Williamson Policy Advocate (PA)

A volunteer position as a policy advocate is available this summer through the Kent D. Williamson Policy and Advocacy Center and NCTE's D.C. office. The role of the PA is to promote NCTE's policy objectives and "increase the prominence of teachers' voices and expertise in federal policy debates.

NCTE will provide funding for travel and lodging in D.C. for one month during the summer of 2016. Find more information at the following link: <http://www.ncte.org/williamson-policy-center/policy-advocate-call>.

Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors

Two resolutions were passed at the annual business meeting. The first was the "Resolution on Student Educational Data Privacy and Security" and addressed recent breaches of student data and the urgency to advocate for students' privacy rights.

Among four key points to the resolution, NCTE resolved to raise awareness of legislation regarding students' data privacy and security and affirm students' right to educational data privacy.

The second resolution was the "Resolution on Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline."

The STPP is a growing system of inequity that channels young people from school to prison rather than provide appropriate educational and counseling services. NCTE resolved to bring awareness to this crisis to a broader audience in hopes of eventually dismantling the STPP.

Advocacy as Capacity Building: Creating a Movement through Collaborative Inquiry

Commitment, capacity building versus reform, and creating a

movement were the driving concepts behind outgoing NCTE President Kathy Short's address on Sunday.

In terms of commitment, she spoke of committing to setting the stage for a change in conditions for literacy learning and teaching in our schools, colleges, universities, and communities as well as providing the tools needed to engage academic and community leaders in meaningful dialogue.

Of capacity building versus reform, she emphasized the importance of building from what we know to add new knowledge and strategies to the classroom as well as taking action outside the classroom.

Capacity building positions teachers as knowledgeable and as learners whereas reform sounds like punishment.

Finally, when contemplating the creation of a movement, Short challenged teachers to ask themselves: *What do I get to do as a member of NCTE to improve the conditions for literacy learning? What is the new story I want to tell? Who do I hope to become within this community we call NCTE?* To have a social movement we need to tell a new story!

Advocacy puts us in charge of our own fate.

NCTE Affiliate Roundtable Breakfast

Shana Peeples, Palo Duro High School, Amarillo, Texas, 2015 National Teacher of the Year inspired many with her "Warriors of Hope" speech: "Be a warrior of hope. Your history is your sword."

Susan Houser spoke on advocacy, as outlined previously in this article, promoting the teaching of English as a very complicated process, not a linear progression of equations and formulas.

MATELA was recognized, as Curt Bobbitt noted earlier this year, with "an unlikely distinction," a membership recruitment award. I was honored to accept the 2015 Kent D. Williamson Affiliate Award for Membership Growth, along with nine other affiliates, on behalf of MATELA.

Region 7 members from Montana, Oregon, and British Columbia reconnected at a roundtable and Sara Davidson, the British Columbia educator also mentioned previously in this article, gave me a hat made by her brother, Ben Davidson, a Haida artist who is committed to helping preserve and revive Haida Art. It is very cool.

Upcoming NCTE Events

- Feb. 25: Literacy Education Advocacy Day in D.C.
- March: Literacy Education Advocacy Month
- July 8-10: Affiliate Leadership Meeting – Midwestern location TBA – Regions 2, 4, 5, 6
- Nov. 17-22 NCTE's Annual Convention, Atlanta, Georgia

SHAKESPEARE IN THE SCHOOLS

'Merchant of Venice' Brings Shakespeare Alive

by Jean O'Connor

"Like Shakespeare's characters, we are bound by family, friendship, money, and religion. And we are also bound by history.

In the post-Holocaust world, it is notoriously difficult to talk about *The Merchant of Venice* because of the sensitive issues it raises about anti-Semitism.

Yet no play gives us a better avenue whereby we can explore how we are bound to our own prejudices, stereotypes, and all-too-often unexamined reactions to those whom we perceive as "the other," so reflects Gretchen Minton, PhD, professor of English at Montana State University, in "Bonds in *The Merchant of Venice*."

More than most of Shakespeare's plays, *The Merchant of Venice* involves the viewer in examination of values, stereotypes, and customs. Shylock, the Jew, demands his "pound of flesh" from the borrower Antonio when Antonio must forfeit his loan, yet when Antonio has money and the law on his side he chooses to force Shylock to convert to Christianity in retribution.

Neither Christian nor Jew is free from prejudice or judgment. The viewer of the play reflects upon these values and so considers his or her own outlook on life.

On Nov. 4, nearly 1,100 students from

Helena High School and their English teachers attended the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* presented by Shakespeare in the Schools at the Helena Middle School Auditorium.

In preparation students reviewed the synopsis of the play and associated themes. Unlike Shakespeare's comedies, *The Merchant of Venice* is a more serious play, presenting problematic and sensitive issues: racism, stereotypes, and prejudice; greed, money, and materialism.

The performance by Shakespeare in the Schools, a production of Shakespeare in the Parks of Montana State University-Bozeman, made the setting accessible to the audience by placing it in post-World War II Venice, a time when issues of race and, particularly, anti-Semitism were prominent.

The artistic stage setting depicting a series of marble archways created by designer Tom Watson brought depth and focus to the production.

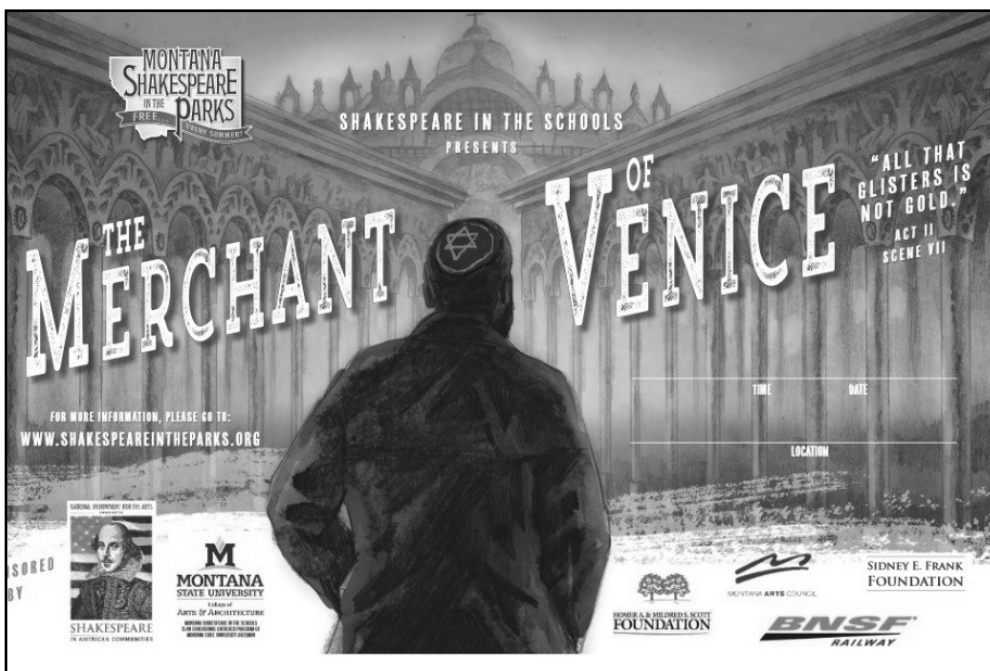
In addition, the setting allowed for multiple scenes to be creatively enacted: the streets of Venice where Bassanio asks Antonio for a loan so he may travel



Teachers/Student Praise for MSIP

- "It is very interesting to learn about Shakespeare and actually see the plays performed after reading them in class. It helps gain a broader understanding of them." —Student, Shields Valley High School
- "My students benefit from things beyond the narrow scope of our small town. Seeing live theater is a rare thing for most of them. It also lends legitimacy to Shakespeare since your actors represent the art form so very well." —Teacher, Conrad High School
- "I think having Shakespeare so readily available has shaped me over the years into a much more cultured person. It's easy to recognize the language and meter now, so I really look forward to the traveling play every year." —Student, Roundup High School
- "I feel that in a rural school with no curricular theater program, it is essential to get this type of experience to the kids. It was extremely well cut and performed to keep the interest of this age group." —Teacher, Roundup High School

See SHAKESPEARE Page 11



From PAGE 10

Shakespeare in schools

to the estate of Portia to ask for her hand in marriage; the business area of Venice where Shylock, a usurer, agrees to loan 3,000 ducats to Antonio for Bassanio's use under condition that if the loan is unpaid he will be entitled to a pound of Antonio's own flesh; and the courtroom where in the final scene Shylock must realize that if he continues to exact the payment of a pound of Antonio's flesh in exchange for the unpaid loan, he will forfeit his life should a drop of Antonio's blood be spilled in the process.

The three caskets of gold, silver, and lead, one of which holds the image of Portia and which will guarantee her hand in marriage to the lucky suitor who guesses at the correct container enclosing the image, are dramatically displayed on three pedestals in the archways of the Venetian setting.

Students watched the performance intently. Shakespeare-in-the-Parks Director and Artistic Director Kevin Asselin commented later, "They really listened. I saw them all leaning in."

A hush came over the crowd when Shylock stepped into the aisles among the students to say the famous words from Act III, Scene i: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? . . . If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?"



Photo courtesy Shakespeare in the Parks

Actors portraying Portia and Bassanio from *Merchant of Venice*.

Praise for Shakespeare in the Schools

- "I've taught Shakespeare for about 17 years. The live performance really brings his work to life for these kids who have only heard that Shakespeare is tough and not easy to understand. By the way, **I've seen a lot of Shakespeare and taught multiple works; your production last week was one of the finest I've ever seen.**" – Teacher, Kallispell High School
- "I liked **how the actors interacted with us and taught the workshops**. It was very nice to have them visit us because we live in a very isolated area and have few visitors, it was very fun too." – Student, Powell High School

The connection was made immediately among all, as Shylock confesses his humanity.

Following the performance, the actors introduced themselves and took questions from the audience. Students learned that the actors for Shakespeare in the Schools, professionals who often have graduate degrees, go through a rigorous selection process and are glad for the opportunity to present Shakespeare to Montana audiences.

Next, four workshops were held at Helena High School. Students worked in groups under the direction of the players to bring to life themes in the play, figures of speech, and stage combat conventions.

Watching the students engaging in lively fashion with one another and the players directing them was energizing and inspiring. Students showed their talents and demonstrated their passion for creative activity.

The workshops offered by the players gave the students the chance to show they could take learning to new levels, as they demonstrated understanding of metaphor, verse, and theme.

The actors joined English teachers and Thespian students in a delicious lunch catered by the Helena High Culinary students. All enjoyed visiting during the brief interlude between workshops.

Shakespeare in the Schools is in part funded by a National Endowment in the Arts Grant, "Shakespeare in American Communities." Because of this contribution, costs are kept low for the schools. Additional money comes from a grant from Walmart, for which Helena High School is grateful. Finally, the English Department provides the balance of the needed funds.

To find out how to bring Shakespeare in the Schools to your school for an amazing production of a Shakespearean play, contact Montana Shakespeare in the Schools through Montana Shakespeare in the Parks at 406 994-3303 or visit their website.

Minton, Gretchen. "I Dare Be Bound Again: Bonds in *The Merchant of Venice*." 2015 *Merchant Study Guide*. Montana Shakespeare in the Parks: Montana State University. Web. 19 Nov. 2015.

SAVE THE DATES

First Folio Brings Plays/Workshops to Missoula

Press Release UM-Missoula

Opening Reception

Date & Time: May 9, 5-7 p.m.

About: Official launch of the exhibition.

Location: Mont. Museum of Art & Culture

Audience: Free and open to the public.

Shakespeare for Students!

Date & Time: May 10, 9am-12pm.

About: Program series for 7th graders.

Students will be bussed to UM and see a fight scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Students will then break into groups and engage in short sessions with members of the Missoula Children's Theater and the School of Theatre and Dance.

Exhibits will include a tour of the Folio.

Funded by SPARK! Arts Ignite Learning

Location: Montana Museum of Art & Culture lobby and gallery, Masquer Theater, Open Space, Montana Theater

Audience: Missoula 7th graders

Shakespeare for Students!

Date & Time: May 11 & 12, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

About: Program series for 7th graders. Students will be bussed to UM and see a fight scene from *Romeo & Juliet*.

Students will then break up into groups and engage in short entertainment sessions with members of the Missoula Children's Theater and the School of Theatre & Dance. Exhibits will include a tour of the Folio.

This program is funded by SPARK! Arts Ignite Learning

Location: Montana Museum of Art & Culture lobby and gallery, Masquer Theater, Open Space, Montana Theater

Audience: Missoula County School District 7th Graders.

Linda Woodbridge, PhD. lecture:

"The First Folio: What it Meant,

What it Means."

Date & Time: May 19, 7-8:30 p.m.

About: This lecture will focus on the importance of the Folio for the preservation of Shakespeare's works and raising the issue of what printed plays meant to Shakespeare's fans in his own time.

Location: Masquer Theater.

Audience: Adults. Free; open to public.

Student players from across MT performing Shakespeare

Date & Time: May 20, Time TBD.

About: Performances of scenes from Shakespeare from student drama classes and clubs from across the state. Q&A after performances, coordinated by Beverly Chin, PhD, and the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts.

Location: Mansfield Library East Faculty Office Area.

Audience: Free and open to the public. Please contact beverly.chin@umontana.edu for more information.

Best practices for teaching Shakespeare workshop

Date & Time: May 21, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

About: Workshop for teachers on best practices for bringing Shakespeare into the classroom, coordinated by Beverly Chin, PhD, and the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts.

Location: University Center, 3rd Floor

Audience: Teachers of English language arts from across Montana. Please contact Beverly.chin@umontana.edu for more information.

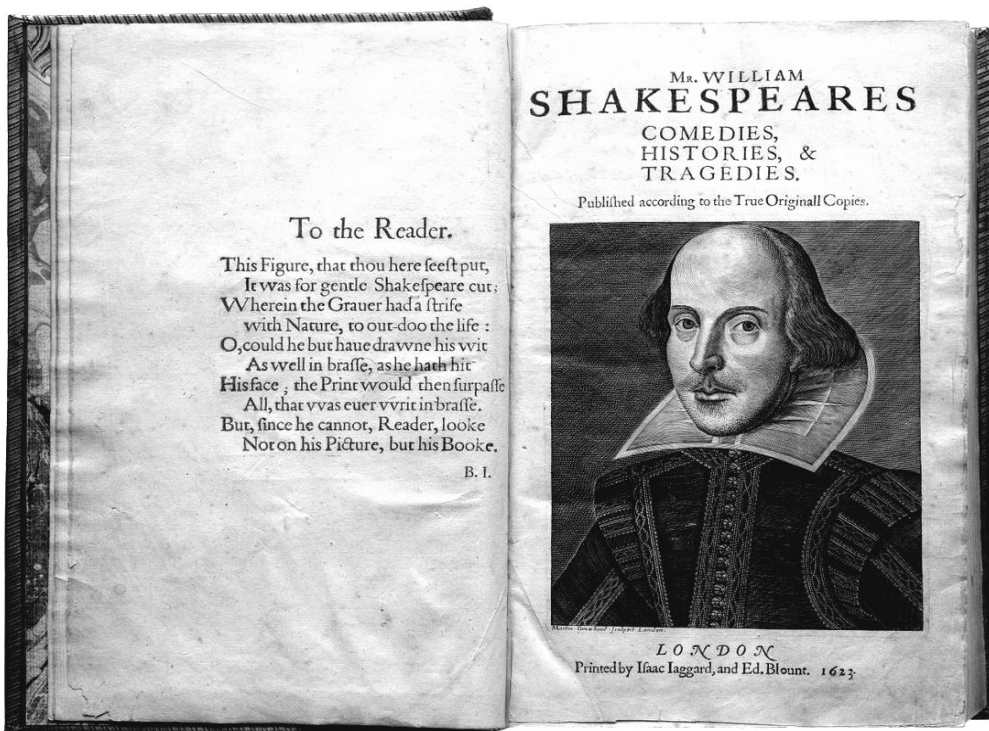
Writing Workshop for Youth.

Date & Time: May 21, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

About: Free and open writing workshop for Missoula youth using the Folio as a creative launch, organized by the Missoula Writing Collaborative.

Location: Montana Museum of Art & Culture.

Audience: Limited to 25 children, ages 9-



Title page with Droeshout engraving of Shakespeare. Shakespeare First Folio, 1623. Folger Shakespeare Library.

Schedule Continued

12. Please email

missoulawriting@gmail.com to register.

Program: John Hunt, PhD, lecture:

"Shakespeare, Jonson, and literary immortality."

Date & Time: May 26, 7-8:30 p.m.,

About: This lecture will use the Folio to illustrate status and practices of writers in early modern England, attitudes toward literary immortality found in Shakespeare's and Jonson's works, and the ongoing cultural project of identifying Shakespeare as the greatest of English writers and remaking him in the image of later times.

Location: Masquer Theater.

Audience: Free and open to all.

Shakespeare's Sky

FOR TEACHERS

If you are interested in having your students perform and/or if you are interested in presenting a workshop for teachers, please contact Dr. Beverly Ann Chin, Chair, Department of English, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812. You may call her at (406) 243- 2463 or email her at Beverly.chin@umontana.edu.

Friday May 20:

We will showcase middle school, high school, and college student performances of Shakespeare. After each performance, the audience will have the opportunity to talk with the student performers about their experience with studying Shakespeare. Free and open to the public.

Saturday May 21:

We will host a teachers' conference featuring workshops on teaching Shakespeare at the middle school, high school and college levels. Teachers will share resources, lesson plans, and instructional strategies that engage their students in the studying of Shakespeare. Free; open to teachers.

Maureen and Mike
Mansfield Library
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
& **MMAC**
Montana Museum
of Art & Culture
PRESENT

First Folio!
The Book That Gave Us
Shakespeare
#FIRSTFOLIOMONTANA
MAY 9 - 31, 2016
PAXSON GALLERY | PARTV CENTER
www.umt.edu/montanamuseum | 406.243.2019

Date & Time: TBA

About: Explore with spectrUM's Discovery Area as we journey back in time to the features of the night sky that inspired Shakespeare's works.

spectrUM will offer hands-on opportunities to compare the tools we use today to Galileo's first use of the telescope to unlock the secrets of the sky. Science based hands-on activities will be featured during the month of May that highlight and celebrate the brilliance of the First Folio's night sky. Please check our calendar at www.spectrum.umt.edu to see an up-

dated list of events, free admission days, and field trip options.

Location: The University of Montana's spectrUM Discovery Area

MORE PROGRAMMING COMING SOON!

Additional Community and Campus Programs

March 10-13, 16-20 2016 MCT presents *The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Abridged*.

April 27-30, May 3-7, 2016 School of Theater and Dance presents *Romeo and Juliet*.

BOOK REVIEW

Fighting Hate, Inspiring Heroism: Rodman Philbrick's 'The Big Dark'

By **DONNA MILLER**



Living on the Northern Tier of Montana called the Hi-Line, I've seen the aurora break dance with a rhythm similar to the description Rodman Philbrick provides in his book *The Big Dark*: "Imagine a lightning bolt hitting a box of crayons and turning it into a colored steam. Like that. Electric colors rippling and pulsing as if they were alive" (3).

In *The Big Dark*, Philbrick, an award-winning author of the classic *Freak the Mighty* and numerous other books for young adults, not only writes in richly descriptive prose but also posits a possible answer to the question, How would humankind respond to a massive solar flare or geomagnetic event that takes out the power-grid, plunging the world into darkness and rendering all electronics, battery operations, and generators powerless?

Presenting possible scenarios, Philbrick's historical fiction account recalls the Carrington Event, a solar superstorm of 1859.

Middle schoolers Charlie Cobb and his best friend Gary Small, also known as Gronk, live in Harmony, New Hampshire. They join the entire town on New Year's Eve to watch "the shape-shifting" lights in the sky.

As all are mesmerized on a night that is so cold "you could sneeze icicles" (1), suddenly the lights go out, motors stop, and flashlights cease to function.

When the generators all die, Mrs. Cobb tells her children—Charlie and Becca—to stay busy as a cure to worry and that people must depend on the generosity of their neighbors. The school janitor and Harmony's volunteer policeman, Reggie Kingman agrees, proclaiming that, more than firewood and food, the townspeople need hope.

When Harmony's bully, Webster Bragg, starts preaching strange, hateful ideas, the town begins to divide. Bragg, the type of man who depends on chaos and fear, claims to base his ideas on his ability to think and reason when he tells the town's population that democracy—which was "weak and deserved to die"—[was] flicked off like a switch" (47).

With the power grid destroyed and the plug pulled on civilization, Bragg believes that "nothing will ever be the same again" (47). Bragg and his family, who live in a compound and pack AR-15 assault rifles, threaten the town and convince many of the townspeople that his imperious form of power trumps the "Happy Talk" of "Mr. King Man." Through Bragg, Philbrick



weaves multiple, metaphoric meanings for the book's title: ignorance, evil, and shadiness.

When—as a result of Bragg's indirect actions—Mrs. Cobb experiences complications related to her diabetic condition, Charlie decides to attempt to reach a neighboring town on cross-country skis and snowshoes in order to secure medication for his mother.

Gronk tells Charlie, "It's a pretty cool thing you're doing" (90), and Charlie agrees that his audacious act might be cool *if* he accomplishes his mission.

Charlie, who braves the coyotes, the elements that threaten to defeat him, and multiple other surprises in his attempt to secure the medication for his mother, decides he really hates the word *if*.

In what becomes a parallel to Balto's Great Race of Mercy, Philbrick explores humankind's behavior in desperate circumstances. With allusions to several Robert Frost poems, readers accompany Charlie on his quest, with "miles to go before he [sleeps]" and as the world is threatened to succumb to fire or ice.

Not only for its historical references and its social impact, this book—due out in January—offers many other opportunities for

See REVIEW Page 18

SMARTER BALANCED

Getting Creative Because of Smarter Balanced Assessment: Evidence-Based Narrative

by Dana Haring

Even those not directly involved with testing get testy about it. As someone who is deeply involved with high stakes testing, one thing I know for certain is that monitoring the Smarter Balanced Assessment evokes a lot of emotions, negative and otherwise.



While watching my middle school students tackle the assessment, I have felt relief, frustration, curiosity, anger, pride and a whole pocketful of other feelings. The aspect of the assessment most likely to send me on a roller coaster of emotions was (and is) the performance task.

When we took one of the early field tests, I felt like, school wide, we had done an excellent job of including more writing across the curriculum and our students were equipped with the tools and skills to be successful on this task.

From what we could tell, students knew what to do with the informative and argumentative tasks and set to work with confidence: it was a proud moment. However, the narrative pieces baffled the students, and this left me shaking my head with that rueful, guilty feeling of “I should’ve known.”

Early in the Common Core State Standards adoption and implementation process, many were led to believe that the Common Core State Standards left no room for narrative writing.

This was, of course, in opposition to the very clear chart in the Common Core State Standards documents that indicates the percentages of the three different text types and purposes at each grade level (as based on the NAEP) and the fact that narrative writing is, indeed, writing standard three (“Montana Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/social studies, Science, and Technical Subjects,” 6).

Still, the belief remained that on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, students would be asked to write an informative piece or an argumentative piece but certainly not a narrative piece. Some teachers at my middle school even decided to wait to teach narrative writing after the testing window to allow more focus on the other types of writing.

Imagine our surprise when students took one of the early versions of the assessment and many, nearly a third, were asked to write narrative pieces in the performance task. I saw teachers react

with wide-eyed disbelief. Some were actually angry, feeling like they had been tricked. Not only was the task a narrative, it was like no narrative our middle school teachers had taught, one in which students were required to read a selection of articles on a given topic and then use evidence from those articles in creating a narrative. This was on an early field test, but still, we were all frustrated to observe our students’ struggle with this task.

Our students persevered, and perhaps we are glad that no results of that field test were made available. Afterward, we asked students to reflect upon their experience with the assessment. Although they indicated they felt prepared and confident about their performance overall, many said they felt unprepared for narrative writing based on articles.

To address this very specific type of writing task, but still keep with what I know to be quality writing instruction, I created a new type of assignment which I call “Evidence-based Narrative.” In this sort of writing, like on the assessment, students use evidence from articles to inform their narrative writing. We use organizers and structures that the students could transfer and from other narrative writing. But, I allow for student choice to broaden the topics and heighten student interest.

Before students start writing, we study narrative pieces which include discernible facts. These can be pointed to as models or examples for student writing.

On the day of introducing the project to students, I give them the timeline handout which I then thoroughly explain. The first step for them is to find two to four informative articles about a topic in which they are interested. I have had students choose topics as varied as elephants, marine biology, fashion, civil engineering, food, golf, and Mexico. I usually give them a few days, including a weekend, to find these articles.

On the due date for the articles, they need to show them to me, either in hard copy or electronically. Of course, there are always students who will not come prepared with articles. Rather than allowing them to fall behind, I prepare packets in advance on a few topics with broad appeal.

(Last year, I had packets about dinosaurs, space travel, and Glacier National Park.) I warn them about this, always making it sound more hideous that it will be.

To make sure they read and understand their articles, students first complete brief summaries of two of the articles they have found. I have them start on those summaries while I walk around the class, asking students about their topics, recording them, and distributing packets of articles to those who did not come prepared. By this point they usually have at least a kernel of an idea for their narrative. Students could also at this point articulate their ideas

“Early in the Common Core State Standards adoption and implementation process, many were led to believe that the Common Core State Standards left no room for narrative writing.”

See SMARTER BALANCED Page 17

MEA-MFT CONFERENCE, BILLINGS

Chris Crutcher Keynote Speech Brings Laughs, Tears

By SUE STOLP

Chris Crutcher's Oct. 16 keynote speech at the Montana Educators' Conference in Billings had the audience both doubled over in laughter and spilling tears as he read excerpts from his novel *Deadline* (2007) and his "ill-advised autobiography," *King of the Mild Frontier* (2003), interweaving stories from his experiences as a counselor and his own childhood that provided the backbone of his writing.

"This little girl is on every page of this book while not mentioned once in the text," claimed Crutcher cryptically, later relating the story of how a play therapist with whom he worked helped a five-year-old girl confront the grief she had experienced due to the double-edged loss of her mother: the first time through drug addiction, the second through a motor-vehicle accident that took her life.

The grieving process that allowed this little girl to act out her anger, forgiveness, and love, eventually letting anger go and being able to move on, inspired Crutcher's writing of *Deadline*, the story of 18-year-old Ben Wolf, who the reader learns right away has been given a death sentence of an incurable disease.

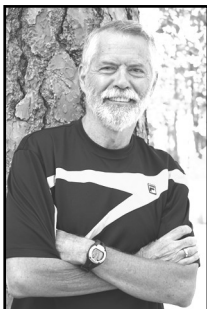
While Crutcher humorously recalled frustration over being asked by high-school teachers about the *theme* of texts, he revealed that *Deadline* was centered on the theme of grief. He knew from the opening of his novel that Ben would not survive the story, but the process by which he grieved the loss of friends and relations, and how they would grieve their loss of him are the areas of the plot he would need to let evolve.

Relating to Characters in *Deadline*

In the Young Adult Literature class that I am currently co-teaching with Professor Joyce Herbeck at MSU in Bozeman, we read *Deadline* this fall in anticipation of Crutcher's coming to Billings. College students used Jeffrey Wilhelm's (2008) prompts for "Relating to Characters" as discussion points about the novel.

I had read *Deadline* this past summer and was impressed with the complexities of the characters Crutcher had created. With Wilhelm's (2008) text, *You Gotta BE the Book* as our course guide, it seemed fitting to use his ideas about characterization for discussion.

Students came prepared to class with three of Wilhelm's



Chris Crutcher



prompts connected to three of the characters from *Deadline*.

Rich discussion around characters who were liked and disliked, their problems and solutions, personal connections to characters, predictions and hopes for characters, and unexpected reactions to characters' decisions and outcomes was facilitated through a ball-of-yarn web activity.

Sixteen college students and two instructors formed the perimeter of a large square table, asking questions about characters as we tossed the yarn to the person who would respond. Using written responses as reflective evidence, conversations with others extended our collective views of the characters.

Personal Connections

One student reflected on her own childhood as she strove to identify with and understand the complicated life Ben lives:

"Upon hearing the devastating news," she writes, "Ben is more concerned with how his parents will react...my heart breaks for (him) as no child should have to carry so many burdens."

"The leaves of an ancient cottonwood outside the window danced in the bright sunlight, and I was breathless. I sat, digesting the indigestible, adrenaline shooting to my extremities as if I were strapped to an out-of-control whirling dervish. I

was thinking of my mom. How in the world do I tell her this?...I know even before I thought it all out that bringing them Doc's news would break the fragile symmetry of our lives." (Crutcher, 2007, pp. 5-6)

"These lines," our student continues, "are filled with clues about the many personalities living inside the Wolfs' household...I know what it is like to try and gauge a parent's emotional state by the vibe in the room." Most students liked Ben's character: he was described as "likeable" with a "dry sense of humor," "strong-willed," "stubborn," and "loving."

He was also judged by some to be selfish, due to the fact that he kept his illness a secret from friends and family for most of the book. One student sums his secrecy up by saying, "Because of his early inevitable death, he makes terribly hard decisions and keeps impossible secrets," and adding that she sees Ben as "an admirable teenage character."

The enigmatic Dallas Suzuki, a stunning volleyball star and Ben's love interest, proved to be even more enticing a personality for many

students, most of whom not only admired her but were also struck by the complexity of her character and how the author's portrayal reminds us to "not judge a book by its cover." One student reflects:

"Dallas really interests me the most because I honestly thought she would be the perfect athletic, smart girl who fell for the boy who was dying. What I didn't realize is how dark her past was... she has a lot more depth than I pictured and her character definitely grows throughout the book as we learn her secret."

See CRUTCHER Page 21

From PAGE 15

SMARTER BALANCED:

to partners in the classroom.

To help them structure and elaborate on that idea, we take the next day to create organizers or plot diagrams to make sure they have the elements of story. This also insures that they don't end up writing essays or reports.

It's important for students to specify early on where in the narrative they will be using evidence from their articles. I have found it works to have them include the facts or information directly on their organizers, sometimes with a citation to help them remember which source had that information in case they need to find more.

After the organizers, I have students spend a day developing a main character and a setting. We often do a combination of drawing and words for this. Like the organizer, this helps place the eventual writing more firmly in the realm of narrative.

Finally, students are ready to write their narratives. Although we often draft at the computer, I will frequently have students write the first paragraph by hand. I find that being armed with this much work already completed encourages students, especially at the middle school level, who are often novice writers and novice typists.

Once that first paragraph is quickly and neatly typed, students can readily see their success and the writing flows from there because of all the prewriting we have completed. As students are working, I remind them to include their evidence, and often more factual information is added during revision.

Evidenced-based Narrative Timeline Helps Students Plot Elements of Story

Depending on your students and your computer availability, the rest of the timeline can vary to huge degree. Like any writing assignment, students will need time to draft, to revise, to edit, and to celebrate. For my students, this has been a power assignment, one that they enjoy because of the aspects of choice and creativity and one that they see as helpful when they take the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

At my middle school, we were initially caught by surprise with a performance task which required students to write a narrative based on evidence. We chose to embrace it as a new subgenre and have found it to be effective as an engaging instructional unit and as a way to help students manage one of the more difficult sections of the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

The next time students took a version of the assessment, they seemed equally prepared for all the tasks in front of them. Such tests can be emotional times for teachers, but when we see that our students are handling the tasks with confidence rather than frustration, the roller coaster ride can be more exhilarating than scary.

Evidence-based Narrative Timeline

This is an assignment with a lot of steps that will be required and scored along the way. Basically, you are going to find 2-4 non-fiction texts that interest you and write a short story that uses evidence from those texts along with made-up parts. It will need to have all the elements of fiction: characters, a plot, dialogue, and description.

SAMPLE HANDOUT

Requirement	Due Date (Time estimates)*	Score
Find 2-4 articles that interest you. It will be easier if they are related, such as two pieces that deal with horses or food or robotics or basketball.	(provide three days at least for students to do this on their own)	
Summaries of at least two articles	(One day)	
Outline/organizer for story (narrative) including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution	(One day)	
Character description for story (drawn or written or a combination)	(Part of a day)	
Setting description for story	(Part of a day)	
Opening paragraph for story	(One day)	
Begin keyboarding story –first two paragraphs due	(One day)	
Continue keyboarding story	(One day)	
Rough draft is due at the end of class	(One day)	
Peer Revisions and corrections	(One day)	
FINAL COPY DUE		

***Please note that in the version I give students, I have calendar dates in this column.**

Work Cited

"Montana Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/social studies, Science, and Technical Subjects."
Montana Common Core Standards and Assessments. Montana Office of Public Instruction, Nov. 2011. Web. 26 Nov. 2015.

From PAGE 14

REVIEW: 'Big Dark' has power to move discussion to critical-thinking conversation

teaching. Replete with allusions, similes, and metaphors, it also supports critical thinking.

The Big Dark has the power to move classroom talk to a critical-thinking level because it invites ethical conversations about bullying, hate, and lying.

It further encourages young people to explore the various *whats* posed by Philbrick's characters and conflicts and to consider the definition of a hero.

Reading texts that feature such topics not only imparts information but also assists readers in forming opinions after encounter-

ing multiple perspectives.

Using a text as a tool for tough talk also affords those engaged in conversa-

tion some distance from the topic, which can be filtered through a character's reaction or opinion.

This attribution provides a level of safety for adolescents who are still discovering their own identities and forming individual philosophies.

With authors and teachers exposing

youth to multiple perspectives and to situations that encourage a critical stance, we may inspire a courage and a wisdom similar to Charlie's and Becca's, a wisdom with potential to lead to an improved way of living in the world.

"Tough talk elicited by young adult literature like The Big Dark holds promise as an antidote to hate and as inspiration to act heroically."

Donna Miller



Author Philbirck's book *The Big Dark* opens students to discussion of multiple-perspective thinking

Tough talk elicited by young adult literature like *The Big Dark* holds promise as an antidote to hate and as inspiration to act heroically.

From PAGE 6

RESOLUTIONS: Racial Disparity in Prisons Problematic

32 percent of youth in juvenile detention centers.

The racial disparities are even starker for atypical students of color.

According to an analysis of the government report by Daniel J. Losen, director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies of the Civil Rights Project at UCLA, about 1 in 4 atypical Black children were suspended at least once versus 1 in 11 atypical White students.

A 2014 landmark study tracked nearly one million Texas students for at least six years. The study controlled for more than 80 variables, such as socioeconomic class.

The study found that African Americans were disproportionately punished compared with otherwise similar White and Latino students. Children with emotional differences also were disproportionately suspended and/or expelled.

In another study, Losen found racial differences in suspension rates have widened since the early 1990s and that suspension is used more frequently as a disciplinary tool.

However, other research, including a more recent study by Losen, shows that removing children from school does not improve their behavior.

Resolution

Since the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) is an injurious yet growing system of institutional inequity that funnels young people who are cognitively atypical or have endured histories of poverty, abuse, neglect, and/or trauma from schools to prisons, be it therefore resolved that the National Council of Teachers of English

- partner with local and national STPP advocacy groups and other professional literacy organizations to bring awareness of this crisis to a broader audience, including community leaders and policymakers;
- strengthen the knowledge base of teacher educators, teachers, counselors, and administrators regarding the relationships among mass incarceration and school curricula, practices, and policies;
- encourage the development and dissemination of restorative and culturally-sustaining pedagogical tools (e.g., research, classroom teaching strategies, and assessments) that help dismantle STPP; and
- identify and disseminate research that supports proactive inclusion of literacy in social justice work.

For more information about NCTE and its policies and resolutions, visit <http://www.ncte.org/positions>

MEA-MFT CONVENTION—BILLINGS

Sitomer Illustrates Textual Themes with Visual Arts

By **SUE STOLP**

Innovation in education is at its best when interdisciplinary learning is at hand, and author and educator Alan Sitomer's session called "Close Reading for Reluctant Readers" at the MEA-MFT Educators' Conference in Billings proved to fit the bill for innovation in English language arts instruction.

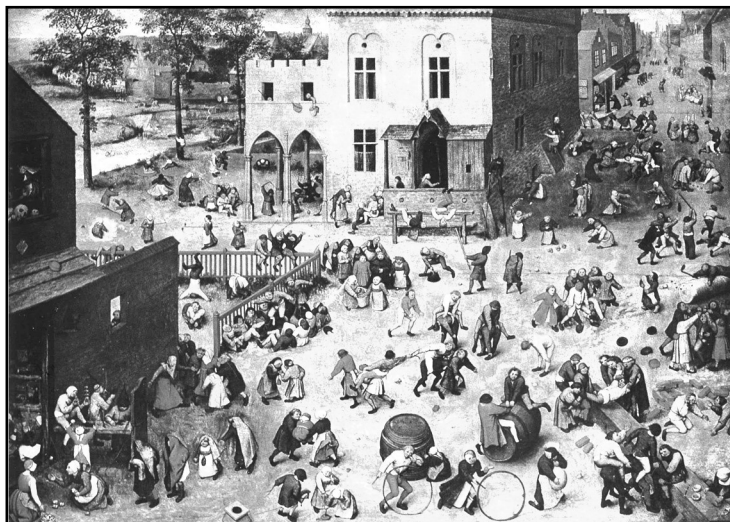


Sitomer motivated the packed audience of teachers at his session to analyze a piece of art, *The Gross Clinic* (1875), by dividing the image of the painting into four corners, encouraging the reader, the viewer, to examine, or re-read, the text while looking for details that provided evidence toward determining the painting's theme.

Textual evidence is determined and inferences are drawn that help the reader to determine the artist's message.

Sitomer also presented at NCTE in Minneapolis with Jeffrey Wilhelm, Michael Smith, and Jim Burke on the topic of teaching for transfer involving visual text. A threshold concept the four presenters emphasized is that texts, whether written or visual, are "made things." The author or artist made specific choices in his

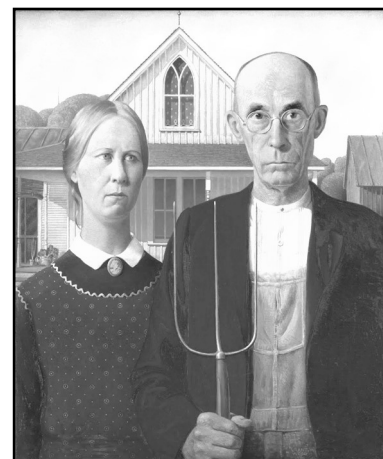
or her work, meaning that the final product "could have been otherwise." A second threshold concept they stated was that reading is a conventional activity and contract; the author or artist carries some of the weight and expects the reader to carry the rest.



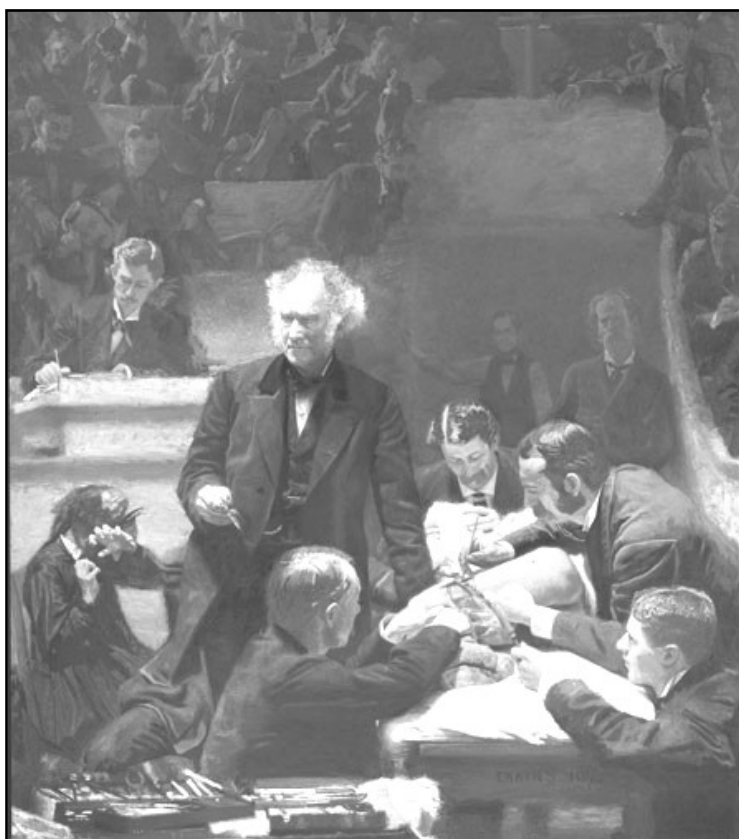
Pieter Bruegel the Elder. *Children's Games*. 1560.

Wilhelm, Smith, Burke, and Sitomer used images such as Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Children's Games* (1560) and Grant Woods' iconic *American Gothic* to demonstrate the possibilities for learning when students are encouraged to illustrate multiple themes within text (written or visual), as long as they are able to justify their thinking.

In terms of these two paintings, analysis can be a statement about society for each time period and place. Truly this method provides scaffolding techniques for reading for students who live in a visual world.



Grant Woods. *American Gothic*. 1930.



Alan Sitomer used Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Samuel D. Gross* (*The Gross Clinic*), 1875 to demonstrate "visual text."

Reading and Writing About Art

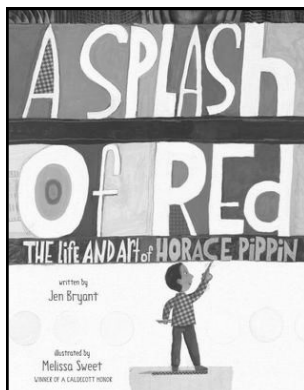
Priscilla Lund, Professor of Art Education at MSU-Bozeman, presented at the Educators' Conference in Billings on the theme of Art and War. Referencing artists such as John Singer Sargent (WWI), Horace Pippin (WW II), Pablo Picasso (Spanish Civil War), and Mary Cassatt (American Civil War), Lund promotes reading and writing about art and war to disrupt preconceptions about the arts, contribute to the shift from STEM learning to STEAM (A is for Art), and to forge connections for students with history and ethical inquiry.

See LUND Page 20

From PAGE 19

LUND: Presents Phased-Approach Process for Evaluating

***A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin*, written by Jen Bryant and illustrated by Melissa Sweet, won the Orbis Pictus award for Outstanding Non-Fiction for Children in 2014.**



Dr. Lund shared the “Phased Approach Process” of evaluating art as a means by which students can talk about – and write about – art. First, viewers describe what they see, using only evidence from the text; next, they apply knowledge of elements and principles of art (“reading”) to draw inferences about the artist’s intent.

Thirdly, interpretation occurs, where the viewer speculates about the meaning of the work and how it may connect to broader knowledge. And finally, the viewer decides how the work of art meets expectations.

I attended two sessions at NCTE in Minneapolis that furthered this idea of increased use of visual art in the teaching of English language arts. Sarah J. Donovan, Ph.D., a middle-school ELA teacher and college instructor from Chicago, modeled a visual-thinking strategy using Picasso’s *The Old Guitarist* (1903-04) to scaffold narrative writing.

Questions about the painting (What’s going on in this picture? What makes you say so? What more can you say?) prompt the viewer to provide textual evidence in making his or her claim. Once observations and inferences are made, students engage in the composition of a narrative about the painting. They choose a perspective (the man, the hand, the guitar) and begin to draft a piece that tells a story.

Pablo Picasso. *The Old Guitarist*. 1903-04

Four Arkansas educators facilitated a session entitled “Van Gogh to

Rothko: The Art of Reading, Discussing, and Analyzing a Visual Text.”

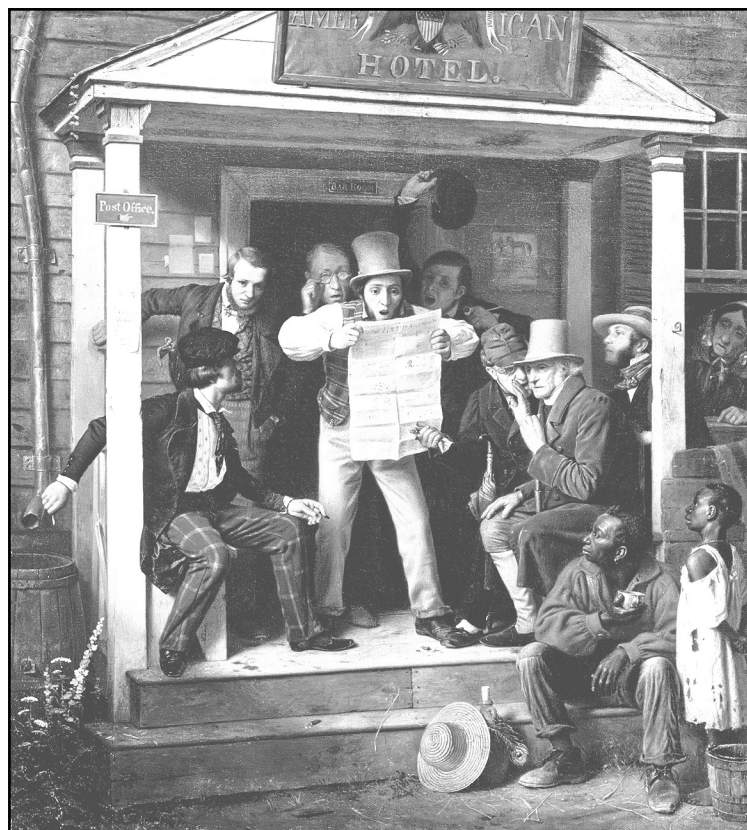
They defined visual literacy as the ability to interpret, analyze, and make meaning of information presented in the form of an image as opposed to a written or printed text.

Despite the misconceptions, the same terminology and language for text-based analysis can be applied to written and visual

text. Examples of this are features such as organization, symbolism, characterization, and figurative language. Without initially revealing the identity of the artwork or artist, participants analyzed Richard Caton Woodville’s *War News from Mexico* (1848) through detailed observation, discussion, movement toward deeper understanding and making claims.

Follow-up activities to the analysis of the text include researching the historical context of the painting, researching the artist, connecting to universal themes, and writing about one’s findings.

Richard Caton Woodville’s *War News from Mexico* (1848)



Aligning Art and ELA Standards

Priscilla Lund’s presentation referenced a document entitled “The Arts and the Common Core: A Review of Connections Between the Common Core State Standards and the National Core Arts Standards Conceptual Framework” that is available through the Montana OPI website: <http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/standards/12Dec-Arts-and-Common-Core.pdf>.

Art standards are aligned with ELA standards in innovative and insightful ways, and the philosophical foundation for the arts – promoting the arts as communication, personal realization, culture, history, and connectors, as a means to well being and community engagement – provides a rationale for increased use of visual art as text.

From PAGE 17

CRUTCHER: Emotional Impact on Kids Far Reaching

Despite the challenges Dallas faces and the respect she earned from her readers, students still struggled with the way she reacts to Ben when he finally tells her his secret. Her flawless character is suddenly deemed “selfish” and causes frustration amongst readers due to what is viewed as an unpredictable response to Ben’s devastating news.

In addition to Ben and Dallas, Crutcher creates complex secondary characters who reveal divergent and distinctive sides of themselves as the plot evolves: Cody (Ben’s brother), Rudy McCoy (a mechanic and the town drunk), Sooner (an antagonistic athlete), Mr. Lambeer (Ben’s history teacher), and Coach Banks also inspire rich discussion in terms of Wilhelm’s (2008)

“Relating to Characters” as students make connections to similar characters they have known in their high-school experiences.

Reflections and Implications for Teaching

College students’ reflections following the teachers’ conference and Crutcher’s keynote provided evidence of new ways of envisioning the process and purpose of

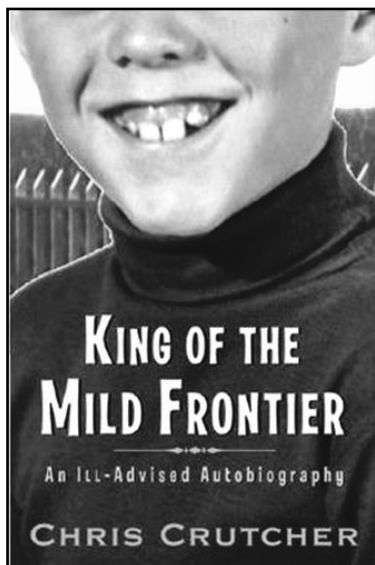
writing. The impact of meeting the author and hearing him speak about his inspirations for writing fueled our students with energy and enthusiasm, and echoed his remarks on his website biography about being forever intrigued by the extremes of the human condition (see sidebar).

Of the 13YA novels we read this semester, *Deadline* was recently voted as the students’ favorite.

These pre-service teachers reflected on how much this may have had to do with the inspiration and insight Crutcher’s speech provided them.

Additionally, many students are still talking about *King of the Mild Frontier* as future reading, having heard the outrageous excerpts Crutcher shared.

One of the hallmarks of Joyce Herbeck’s teaching of children’s and young adult literature is to learn about the authors, seek out their websites, watch interviews available on line and, when possible, such as at the state educators’ conference, attend their keynote speeches. In the case of Crutcher and *Deadline*, the emotional and educational impact on students will be far-reaching.



Comments from Pre-Service Teachers

Hearing his writing process and background information about Deadline helped put the book in perspective and was thought provoking.

His message that all people heal at their own pace gave me a whole new perspective on his book Deadline and helped me better understand the characters in the novel. Going in to the session I thought I had solid mindset when it came to this novel and its purpose but I now interpret it in a different way and it helps me think of ways I would use it in a classroom setting.

(Crutcher’s) speech was at times heart wrenching and at times hilarious. It almost felt as if he told the saddest story he could manage and then complemented it with the funniest story he could tell.

References:

- “Author and Loudmouth: Chris Crutcher.” <http://www.chriscrutcher.com/biography.html>.
Crutcher, Chris. (2007). *Deadline*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
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Pictures from Dinner with Alan Sitomer MEA-MFT Convention in Billings

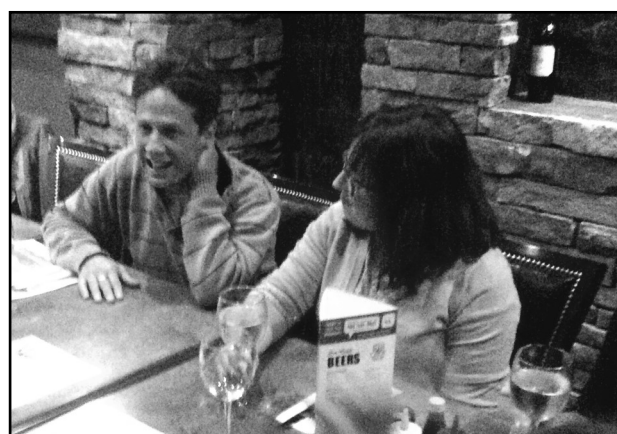


Photo courtesy Leanne Deschamps

MATELA Members enjoy dinner with Alan Sitomer, keynote speaker at MEA-MFT Convention. From Left, Clockwise around the table: Leanne Deschamps, Alan Sitomer, Dana Haring, Jessica Gallo, Katie Kuhlmeier Miller, Beverly Chin, and Jeff Ross.

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CHILLER TAKES OVER AS PRESIDENT

MATELA to Hold Board Meeting Jan. 9 in Helena**By Caitlin Chiller**

Four years ago Dottie Susag said to me, "I am going to a MATELA meeting this weekend, and I think you would really enjoy meeting the board. We need a young person to help us with technology and updating our website. Would you be interested?"

I'll admit I really wanted to go because I was curious to meet other English teachers and because I felt a disconnect between my own teaching practice and what other teachers were doing in the state.

At the meeting I connected with high school teachers like Becky Cox and Jean O'Connor, and University educators like Bev Chin, Jan Clinard, Joyce Herbeck and Curt Bobbitt. Listening to the board, I was energized about the work being done on behalf of Montana ELA teachers like me and how much effort the work took. I had no idea that MATELA organized the ELA sectionals at MEA-MFT conferences, nor did I know about their advocacy for challenged and banned books.

Board members were eager to share their successes and to listen to my concerns about curriculum and instruction. This was during the early days of Common Core, and I remember rich discussions with regard to how teachers should read the standards. As I began to take on leadership roles, first as technology chair then as First VP in charge of MEA-MFT conferences, I expanded my professional connections.

Now as President of MATELA, I am excited to step into a broader leadership role and to address some of my passions with regard to MATELA's mission statement: The Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts promotes the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education.

I believe MATELA best accomplishes this mission by its service to you, our members. That is why we are working on several projects that will bring together teachers, replicating the invigorating discussions that happen at board meetings.

Now more than ever, teachers need their professional communities to serve as face-to-face and online resources for quality professional development and networking. I sense that there are many teachers like me who want to connect with other teachers in the same content areas and grade levels.

I hope that MATELA can be the gathering hub for all teachers. In the coming months, expect to see a stronger MATELA social media presence as well as professional development opportunities in the spring and summer.

I hope that you will also engage in the dialog we have started about ways to help better connect teachers in our large state. Please reach out to me at caitlin.chiller@gmail.com. I look forward to my year of serving you, MATELA members.

**Agenda for MATELA Board Meeting
Jan. 9, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Helena High School**

- Caitlin Chiller: Introductions
- Sue Stolp: Approval of minutes from October
- Dana Haring: Approval of Treasurer's Report
- Board Reports: (UofM, Aaniiih Nakoda College, UGF, OPI, MSU-Bozeman)
- Curt Bobbitt: Recognition of awards NCTE, MATELA Affiliate)
- Sue Stolp & Beverly Chin: NCTE Conference
- Dan Johnson & Katie Kotynski: Online presence (Facebook, website, Twitter)
- Caitlin Chiller & Curt Bobbitt: Online publications vs. print (survey results)
- Jill Melcher: Keynote speakers for MEA-MFT
- Caitlin Chiller & Christy Mock-Stutz: ELA Teacher Leaders (OPI and MATELA)
- Beverly Chin: First Folio exhibition and PD
- Beverly Chin: MWP sponsorship of Worlds Apart but Not Strangers, supported by the Holocaust Educators Network.
- Caitlin Chiller: MATELA Summer PD (Edcamp style PD geared toward rural and new teachers, TBD????)
- Caitlin Chiller: Signatures Support
- Caitlin Chiller: Possible combined K-8 membership for MATELA and MCTM (have informally talked with MCTM in the past)
- Adjournment

MATELA Membership Form

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. Or use our online order form at www.matelamt.com. 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) _____

PLEASE CHECK:

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:

Dana Haring, MATELA Treasurer
620 First Avenue West, Kalispell, MT 59901

Or sign up online at www.matelamt.com

Credit cards accepted

Please consider sharing your talent and expertise with MATELA!

Upcoming publication deadlines:

Spring UPDATE: March 1

MEJ 2014: June 1

Fall UPDATE: Sept. 1

Winter UPDATE: Dec. 1

Submit articles for consideration on the webpage: Matelamt.com/publications.htm.

All submissions must be in .rtf or .docx format, no columns or extra spaces between paragraphs, and without embedded graphics or photos. Include a byline with your name the way you would like it to appear at the beginning of your copy if you would like credit.



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