



INTERNATIONAL
LITERACY
ASSOCIATION

Texas Association for Literacy Education Newsletter

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

Editor: [Sara Ranzau](#)

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Texas Association for Literacy Education is to promote literacy that will enhance the lives of all Texas citizens personally, socially and economically.



President-elect Brad Womack with researcher Catherine Snow at a Harvard University training for adolescent reading interventions.

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Registration ends: February 2, 2018

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A Message from Our President – [Laurie Sharp](#)

I am excited to share several wonderful updates for TALE's 2017-2018 fiscal year! First and foremost, our daily thoughts are with those who were affected by Hurricane Harvey at the beginning of the school year. TALE Board members identified five school campuses in Texas that sustained major damage and provided each with a \$1,000 donation to assist with the replacement of literacy resources. These campuses were:

- Hilliard Elementary School - Houston
- Thompson Intermediate School - Houston
- Rockport-Fulton High School - Rockport
- Lemm Elementary School - Klein
- Oak Forest Elementary School - Vidor

We hope that each of these schools, as well as all others that were affected, receive continued support as they rebuild their classrooms and libraries.

Supporting quality professional learning for literacy is a priority for TALE. This year, we partnered with the Center for the Collaborative Classroom, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing quality professional learning to teaching professionals. Through this partnership, TALE provided two free webinars as professional learning activities:

- Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Student-Centered Classroom (October 12) – hosted by Dr. Sonia Nieto. This webinar was open to all literacy professionals and preservice teachers and addressed ways to be culturally responsive educators.
- Best Practices in Writing Instruction (November 7) – hosted by Dr. Marisa Ramirez Stucky. This webinar was reserved for preservice teachers and addressed ways to foster best practices in writing instruction for all learners.

Finally, plans for the 2018 TALE Conference are going extremely well! Attendees will choose from over 120 presentations offered in a variety of formats: workshops, sessions, research posters, facilitated interactive discussions, author panels, and roundtable presentations. Presentations will address all aspects of literacy among all levels of learners. We hope that you can join us for this amazing professional learning event on February 23 – 24, 2018 at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. Information and registration details are available on the TALE Conference webpage: <http://www.texasreaders.org/tale-conference.html>

In closing, I encourage you to stay connected to TALE! Please ensure we have your current email on file, follow @TXLiteracyEd on Twitter, and like @texasreaders.org on Facebook. Thank you for being an important and valued member of TALE!



Save the Date

2018 TALE Conference: February 23 & 24, 2018



Event Date: February 23 - 24, 2018

Location: West Texas A&M University - Canyon, Texas

Conference Email: taleconference@gmail.com

Conference Chairs: Dr. Laurie A. Sharp & Mr. Brad Womack

Conference proposals are accepted March 27, 2017 - August 7, 2017.
Visit TALE's website for more information: texasreaders.org

The Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE) is the Texas affiliate of the International Literacy Association. The mission of TALE is to promote literacy that will enhance the lives of all Texas citizens personally, socially, and economically.

Our annual conference will offer professional learning for professionals who serve all levels of learners.

For more information please visit:
ILA: literacyworldwide.org
TALE: texasreaders.org

TALE has partnered with West Texas A&M University's College of Education and Social Science and Department of Education to host this event.



Social Media:
[TALE Facebook Page](#)



[TALE Twitter](#)
[@TXLiteracyEd](#)



TALE Website
www.texasreaders.org

Publications:
[TALE Journal](#)
[TALE Yearbook](#)

Contacts:
talemembership@gmail.com
taleconference@gmail.com

Join us!

Leadership in Literacy Award Recipients 2018

Please join us at the annual conference on Friday, February 23, 2018 to honor the recipients of the Texas Education Leadership in Literacy Award!

Letricia Niegos

Inspired by her son's challenges with dyslexia, Letricia "Puff" Niegos, a generous philanthropist, partnered with West Texas A&M University's College of Education and Social Sciences to establish the West Texas A&M University Center for Learning Disabilities. Recognized as a "center of excellence" for learning disabilities within the Texas A&M University system, the Center provides resources and support for parents of children with learning disabilities through monthly workshops. The Center also assists teachers in understanding learning disabilities so that they may help their students cope and learn in the classroom. Puff is a certified academic language therapist and has volunteered over 1,000 hours as a literacy interventionist with students who struggle with literacy.



Carol Wickstrom

Selected for her work with public school teachers through the North Star of Texas Writing Project, Dr. Carol Wickstrom upholds TALE's mission of commitment to education and literacy. Wickstrom is a faculty member of the University of North Texas and teaches literacy courses at the graduate and undergraduate level in the Language, Literacy, Bilingual and ESL Program. As director of the North Star of Texas Writing Project, Wickstrom guides professional development for hundreds of participating teachers through summer writing institutes utilizing the writer's workshop approach. Wickstrom believes this approach helps teachers to grow as educators and learners while providing a gateway to a larger community of writing professionals. The North Star of Texas Writing Project is part of the university-based sites of the National Writing Project.



TALE Member Spotlight!



Melissa Walker

What is your occupation?

I am a first grade teacher.

What degrees do you hold? I have my Bachelor's in Education and just completed half of my Master's degree for Reading/Language Arts.

How are you involved with TALE? I attended and presented at the TALE Conference in Corpus last February, and I published an article in the TALE yearbook with my presentation partner, Alida Hudson.

What is your literacy vision? In my ideal literacy world, students would learn how to love literacy and become lifelong readers and writers. Students would use the skills and knowledge of reading and writing to make an impact in their communities.

What is something in your life you are most proud of? My first year teaching was a typical first year: it was very difficult and I wanted to quit. Instead, I looked to literacy role models such as Lucy Calkins and Jennifer Serravallo to figure out what they were doing so that I could apply the same techniques in my classroom. The determination that I had to do better, not only for my students, but for myself, is a huge reason why I am where I am today. Now, I'm getting my Master's degree and publishing articles and conducting workshops about reading! It's incredible!

See Melissa's Words of Advice to Literacy Leaders here:

goo.gl/BSxW6B



Melinda Butler

What is your occupation?

I have been serving as instructional reading coach at Jack M. Fields, Sr. Elementary School for the past ten years. I support third through fifth grade teachers with professional development, reading and writing resources, analysis of data, coaching, modeling, co-teaching, and observation and feedback. Additionally, I support some students with reading interventions.

What degrees do you hold?

I am currently working on my Ed.D. in Literacy at Sam Houston State University, and will graduate in May of 2018. I obtained my M.Ed. in Reading from Sam Houston State University in 2007.

How are you involved with TALE?

I joined the Advocacy Committee several years ago, and became Co-Director of the committee last year.

What is your literacy vision?

My literacy vision is for all teachers, elementary through college, to have the freedom to teach reading and writing workshop in classrooms where students have choices of what to read, what to write, and what to think. In these classrooms, teachers advocate for students and their families, promote family literacy, and connect student learning to social issues outside of the classroom.

What is something in your life you are most proud of?

That is a very tough question. I would have to say that I am proudest of my daughter – of the amazing young woman she has become.

See Melinda's Words of Advice to Literacy Leaders here:

goo.gl/8yFUFy

Want to contribute to the newsletter?

Book Reviews:

Send book reviews no later than March 21, 2018.

Additional Submissions:

Member Spotlight and Original Works poetry, short stories, and art work submission due dates below.

TALE Member Spotlight:

Nominations due no later than March 21, 2018.

TALE Member Original Works:

Original poems and short stories due no later than April 21, 2018.

EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO:
talenewsletter@gmail.com

Use newsletter section as subject line.

Committee Reports

Advocacy Development

TALE realizes the importance of keeping members connected with topics and legislative issues concerning literacy. TALE seeks to use our knowledge and experiences to inform and influence others about policy and legislation for meaningful practices.

Advocacy Session

You are invited to attend a special advocacy action session during the TALE annual conference hosted by the Advocacy Development Committee. The session will include a presentation on advocacy etiquette and hands on tips for communicating with local and state representatives. We encourage you to attend and learn more about the collective power of supporting literacy needs. Check for time and location in the conference program.

2018 Texas Education Leadership in Literacy Award

As part of our strategic plan, TALE's Advocacy Development Committee established an annual award that recognizes the efforts of a leader in Texas who has promoted literacy. On behalf of TALE and the Advocacy Development Committee, we would like to recognize the winners of the 2018 Texas Education Leadership in Literacy Award: Letricia Niegos and Carol Wickstrom.

Send items of interest to the committee at taleadvocacydevelopment@gmail.com.

Communication Committee

The 2017 TALE Yearbook was published in October 2017, and is available for download [here](#). We would like to recognize and thank the editorial team for putting together a phenomenal publication: Managing Editor Jodi Pilgrim and Associate Editors Laurie Sharp and Elaine Hendrix.

The 2018 TALE Yearbook is currently accepting submissions from presenters at the 2018 TALE Conference. We welcome the new editorial team for this upcoming publication: Managing Editor Laurie Sharp, Associate Editors Elaine Hendrix and Lucinda Juarez, and Copy Editor Lori McLaughlin.

Membership Development

TALE membership is currently 373. If you have your account set up to auto renew with your credit card, please be sure to update your account when your card expires. Your account can be accessed at texasreaders.org under the "Members" tab. Membership is \$10 annually and includes access to webinars through our partnership with the Center for the Collaborative Classroom. Please encourage your colleagues to join TALE.



Want to Know More?

If you are interested in finding out more about what our committees are working on or joining one of them, follow the links below or email the committee chair!

[Advocacy Development](#)

Directors: Sonja Gaddy and Melinda Butler
taleadvocacydevelopment@gmail.com

[Communication Committee](#)

Director: Alida Hudson
Alida.hudson13@gmail.com

[Community Involvement](#)

Director: Matthew Panozzo
talecommunityinvolvement@gmail.com

[Educator Empowerment](#)

Director: Kathy Stephens
drksteph@gmail.com

[Membership Development](#)

Director: Jackie Ingram
talemembership@gmail.com

(Committee Reports Continued)

Community Involvement

Leaving Literacy Footprints across Texas 2017-2018

The Community Involvement Committee is excited to see everyone at the upcoming conference! Be sure to stop by our table Saturday, February 24th for information on how your school can apply for ILA's Exemplary Reading Program award. Applications are due in November of each academic year, so pick up your application checklist to get a head start on the competition. For more information, visit the International Literacy Association's Award site: <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/about-us/awards-grants/exemplary-reading-award>

Thanks to the work of Dr. Robbie Raymond and her students at the University of Houston--Clear Lake we have added additional resources to our committee page. Please visit the [Community Involvement Committee's](#) page on the TALE website to browse the "Resources for Middle School Readers".

If you're interested in leaving your own literacy footprints, email Matt Panozzo at talcommunityinvolvmnt@gmail.com. We would love to have you on our committee!

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."
— **Mother Teresa**

Educator Empowerment

Members of the Educator Empowerment Committee met at the 2017 annual conference and have talked by email to make plans for 2018. The primary goals of the committee are to "empower TALE members in ways that develop voice, ownership, and leadership of their professional literacy landscape". We will be focusing our efforts with pre-service teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, literacy leaders, and Teacher Educators (higher education faculty who prepare teacher candidates). Plans include welcome packets for our newest teachers attending the 2018 conference, sharing of online resources, and recognition of recent teacher candidate graduates.

The Empowerment committee is currently in search of a new director. If you are interested, please contact Laurie Sharp [here](#).

"Don't be satisfied with stories, how things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth."
— **Jalaluddin Mevlana Rumi**

Original Works

From Dover to Canterbury

Ashley Thomas

Member from Hunt, TX

“May I see your ticket, sir?”

Without even lifting my eyes from my novel, I thrust my ticket at the ticket inspector in the aisle and listened to him grunt with displeasure as he handed it back to me. As he passed, I lifted my eyes over the top of my book to watch him trudge his feet along the floor to the other passengers like a slug pulling his way across the grimy earth. True, being a ticket inspector would seem to be a somewhat simple occupation, and while I would gladly take a position of such luxury, I could not be bothered to communicate with people that I did not recognize.

“Next stop: Dover.”

Being a data entry clerk for an insurance company requires little to no contact with others, and I would like to keep it that way. Social interaction with people whose company you do not enjoy is as pointless as buying automobile insurance when you don’t even own an automobile.

Finish the story: goo.gl/RrtDxs

My Education

Chassidy Woodard

Member from Kress, TX

I have had a love-hate relationship with my education.

I have been both ecstatic and nervous when planning my goals.

I have smiled, while cursing silently, when given constructive criticism by my instructors.

My education was worth the sacrifice.

The long hours, the tears rolling down my cheeks, and the hours that rolled by.

I am able to enjoy the little things.

I am able to lessen my stress.

I am proud of myself.

My education was worth the money spent.

Finish the poem: goo.gl/9tMeid

Want to contact our Original Works Authors?

[Ashley Thomas](#) – “From Dover to Canterbury”

[Chassidy Woodard](#) – “My Education”

ISSUE 2 – Winter 2018

TALE

Texas Association for
Literacy Educations
www.texasreaders.org

Board Members:

Robin Johnson, Laurie Sharp,
Brad Womack, Malene Golding,
Michael Kessner, Jill Culmo,
Codi Freeman, Sandra Munillo-
Sutterby, Sonja Gaddy, Jackie
Ingram, Kathy Stephens, Alida
Hudson, Kamshia Childs, Julie
Teel-Borders



What are you reading??

Reviewed by
[Jessica Sturm](#)
Kerrville ISD

As a young high school student, I was obsessed with *The Count of Monte Cristo*. I tackled this hefty tome in, what was then, for me, a record-breaking three weeks. It left me wracked. So, later, when I learned that there was a modern writer who exuded the attributes of that novel, the dark and gloomy atmospheres, the troubled protagonist, and the plot for vengeance, I eagerly went out and purchased what would turn out to be one of my all-time favorite novels *The Shadow of the Wind*.

Read the full review:
goo.gl/EttoRG



Reviewed by
[Austin Clarkson](#)
Kerrville ISD

Nina LaCour’s *We Are Okay* examines how we process tragedy—how the damaged soul can slowly heal through time and the love of others.

The story opens as the troubled protagonist, Marin, prepares to spend Winter Break alone in her East Coast college dormitory, instead of heading home to California.

LaCour patiently reveals the reasons for Marin’s self-appointed solitude and sadness through a series of flashbacks to her senior year in high school.

Read the full review:
goo.gl/PhkFw5