

# Texas Association for Literacy Education

TALE

Volume II, Issue II  
Fall 2012

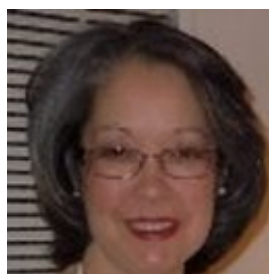
## President's Message

Soon it will be 2013, and TALE continues to be transformed because of you, our members. As of October 24th, our membership has reached 200. That is significant because TALE exists for its members. It is because of you that this state organization will grow and thrive. Because of you, TALE's open collaboration with other lit-

eracy organizations has resulted in a co-sponsored session at IRA's 2013 convention. Because of you, this newsletter is becoming a venue for members to share their ideas, TALE's Facebook page is up to 198 likes, and a call has gone out for editors of a TALE journal! Answering the call of its members, TALE is dedicated

to sharing information and opportunities for educators to grow in the profession. Thank you, Texas educators, for joining us on this adventure.

~Carolyn Denny



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### Special Points of Interest:

- IRA convention buzz
- TALE contributions
- Featured website on tolerance
- New feature *Technology Tales*
- Young adult literature
- Featured members at the state and national level

*"No skill is more crucial to the future of a child, or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy."*

*- Los Angeles Times, "A Child Literacy Initiative for the Greater Los Angeles Area"*



Empowering Literacy Leaders. Developing Successful Readers.

**IRA 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**

Celebrat**ing** Teach**er**s Making **A** Difference

**SAN ANTONIO**  
**April 19 - 22, 2013**  
 Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center  
 San Antonio, Texas

## IRA Sessions Causing a Buzz with TALE Members!



"One session that I am looking forward to hearing is Richard Allington talking about "What Research Says About Teaching So That All Children are Reading on Grade Level." I've always believed that what students need is a strong primary foundation in reading."

~Carolyn Denny

"I can't wait to see Rick Riordan! I love this author as both a mother and educator. His books are fun and exciting, inspire a greater understanding of mythology, and serve as a bridge to other literary works."

~Leslie Haas

"I am excited to attend Ellin Keene's session based on her book *Fostering Deeper Understanding With Student Discourse: Putting the Dimensions and Outcomes of Understanding to Work*.

Previously I have read *Mosaic of Thought* by Keene and was able to use the information from that book immediately after reading it, so I look forward to hearing what she has to say based on her new book. She is so knowledgeable about reading comprehension. I know that I will learn something that I can bring back to my campus and use right away."

~Ann Whiteside

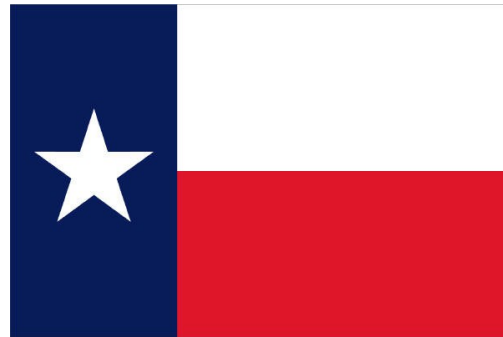
"I'm excited to attend one of the "Teaching Edge" sessions presented by Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell. Their session is titled, "Genre Study: Teaching with Fiction and NonFiction Books (K-8)." I used their valuable textbooks when I taught undergrad education courses and with my present research in the doctoral program at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Very excited to hear them speak!"

~K. Elaine Hillis





# **TALE's Special Session at IRA**



## **Making a Difference: Texas Authors, Texas Teachers and Texas Literacy Organizations Focus on Critical Reading**

The Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE), the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTELA), and the Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading (TAIR) will share their purpose, history, and current professional development activities.

Participants will engage in a professional development rooted in teaching nonfiction texts and will be joined by Texas authors who will demonstrate how to cultivate critical thinking, reading, and writing with students at both elementary and secondary levels.

## Featured Website

### [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org)



I want to share with you a fantastic website I found called Teachingtolerance.org. Teaching Tolerance is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center found in Montgomery, Alabama started in 1991. It not only promotes literacy, but it also focuses on “reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation’s children.” The Southern Poverty Law Center provides free educational materials, like handouts, pamphlets, and videos to teachers and educators in the United States and abroad. They produce a magazine twice annually, provide free

curriculum kits, and have an outstanding weekly email newsletter. Teachers actually can subscribe to the magazine for free!

On the website, you can search the magazine, learn helpful professional development ideas, and locate classroom activities that strengthen diversity. My favorite part about the website is finding books on different cultures and groups of individuals that I can share with my son so he can learn to embrace all people.

As a doctoral student at Texas A&M University-Commerce, I am interested in critical literacy and social jus-

tice within schools. Teachingtolerance.org is a website I access frequently to search for helpful publications that support the literacy needs of teachers and students in schools. They have resources for reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visual representation for educators. I am also alerted to the latest news about hate and extremism by the newsletter “Hatewatch” sent out by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Without a doubt, I highly suggest visiting this website!

~K. Elaine Hillis

## Like Us



Facebook is an excellent opportunity for each of us to both post and answer questions on literacy education.

Let’s support one another through collaborative mentorship and teambuilding. Please “like” TALE at

<http://www.facebook.com/texasreaders.org>

# Technology Tales

## Virtual Pinning: A New Way of Sharing and Evaluating Classroom Ideas

How many of us are continuously searching for clever lessons, useful management techniques, or helpful resources for the classroom? Recently, I started using Pinterest (<http://pinterest.com/>), a virtual pinning site, to learn what other teachers are doing in their classrooms and to share my own ideas with other educators.

What is Pinterest? Imagine the corkboard in your office or classroom where you pin your greatest ideas. Now imagine this corkboard being online and including websites, videos, and photographs. You may subscribe to “follow” individuals (i.e., you will receive their updated pins), and individuals may choose to “follow” you. Before using Pinterest, forthcoming users must apply for an account. This process is free and takes about two weeks. Next, en-

rolled users can categorize their pins by creating pinning boards. I personally have boards for traveling, cooking, and classroom ideas.

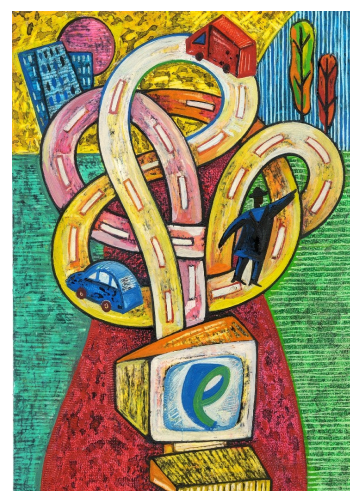
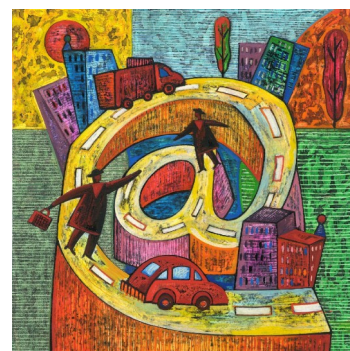
I not only use Pinterest as a venue for sharing ideas, I also use it as an instructional tool with my pre-service teachers. First my students and I begin to follow one another; this allows us to view one another’s pins. As we pin an item we provide a brief comment that connects the pin to our course objectives. For example, we may comment how the pinned item relates to student empowerment, state standards, or how it lends itself to appropriate modifications. This activity provides my pre-service teachers with opportunities to make connections to our course objectives and provides me with multiple op-

portunities to evaluate my students’ understandings.

Not only is Pinterest increasing the learning opportunities among my current students, but I am able to continue this activity with students after they complete my courses. Also, once a student pins an idea, this idea stays on their pinning board until they delete it. Ideally, I hope my students walk into their first classroom with a virtual pinning board full of clever lessons, useful management techniques, and loads of helpful resources.

Pinterest has provided a transitive learning opportunity for me and my students. I hope to “follow” your pins in the near future!

~Stephanie Grote-Garcia

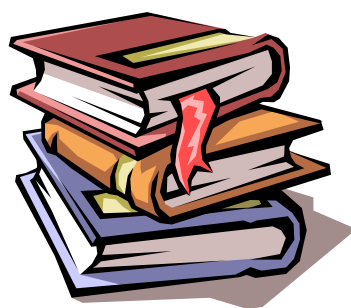




# TALE Member Book Review

## *Dancing With the Devil and Other Tales from Beyond*

### by René Saldaña's Jr.



In this coming-of-age YA book, René Saldaña Jr. takes a fresh approach to Mexican American folklore. Throughout the tales, Saldaña places an emphasis on parental, cultural, and religious values for the Mexican American culture within which dichos such as “Dime con quién andas y te dire quién eres—Tell me who you hang out with and I’ll tell you who you are” and didactic stories like Saldaña’s “God’s Will Be Done” are deeply embedded. Creating accessible and captivating versions enables students at all levels to explore elements of fiction and investigate their own culture-based lore. Saldaña, raised on the border in Peñitas in the Lower Rio Grande Val-

ley, knows and writes these stories well.

In Saldaña’s tale “God’s Will Be Done,” the intertwining of parental, cultural, and religious values is presented when the story’s protagonist, Cecilia, fails to “honor [her] parents, and trust that they know what is best.” Cecilia refuses to acknowledge the belief that desires, plans, and dreams can only be attained “if God wills it.” As a result of her defiance, even her closest friends want “to avoid God’s punishment” by disagreeing with what they perceive as “sacrilegious” behavior. Saldaña effectively highlights the culture’s emphasis on how one can achieve goals only when and if two higher

orders will it—parents and God.

Although some readers may initially feel as though these stories have already been told, Saldaña organizes his tales in an unexpected order that immediately draws in the reader through horror, sadness, and even humor. Saldaña’s *Dancing with the Devil and Other Tales from Beyond* is a collection any reader would enjoy. It may even serve as a reminder of the various systems a given culture may set forth for youth. The bilingual book includes the Spanish translation.

~Monica Sifuentes

# TALE Member Book Review

## *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green

Popular YA author John Green tackles the heavy subjects of death and bereavement in his newest novel, *The Fault in Our Stars*.

The book's two central characters are high school students, Hazel and Augustus, who meet at a cancer support group in their home city of Indianapolis. Both teens have struggled with the horrors of cancer, and both are learning to cope with the physical and social disadvantages caused by cancer. At first, Hazel and Augustus are attracted to each other by their quirky personalities and clever conversation skills, but soon this attraction transforms into something much more profound.

By the end of *The Fault in Our Stars*, Augustus and Hazel's exploits have taken them to Amsterdam and back, and, together, they come face to face with the ultimate obstacle: death. Along the way, they discover that love is a renewing force in the wake of despair.

The book is flecked with John Green's signature snort-laughing humor, which serves to balance the heavy topic of death that permeates the work. With vivid language and prolific wit, Green depicts the stark reality of loss.

In one scene Augustus compares a cancer death to the detonation of a bomb: the aftermath leaves holes in the lives of those nearest them. As in other of his works—

such as *Looking for Alaska* (2005) and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (2010)—in *The Fault in Our Stars*, Green tackles issues with more courage than most writers, and with more skill than most writers. And as with his other works, *The Fault in Our Stars* is woven with characters that linger in the reader's mind for a long time after reading.

~Billy Cryer



## **TALE's Summer 2012 Featured Member is Recognized as IRA's December Member of the Month!**



**[Check out our website to read her full interview!](#)**

*"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."*  
**~ Albert Einstein**





# Featured TALE Members for Fall 2012



## Sharon O'Neal

Sharon O'Neal is an Associate Professor at Texas State University - San Marcos. She holds a B.S. degree in Secondary Education and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of Texas at Austin. She received a Master of Arts in Reading Education from The University of Ala-

bama at Birmingham. Her current research interests include reader response, young adult and children's literature, early childhood literacy development and rural education. She has worked as a public school teacher at both secondary and elementary levels.



## Paul Haupt

Paul Haupt has served the public schools of El Paso for over 40 years as a public school teacher and currently a mentor for new teachers. He is also a consultant for the alternative certification program at the University of Texas at El Paso and president of Professional Development Associates. In addition to active professional service to NEA and TSTA, Paul has a long service history with the International Reading Association which includes Membership Committee and

Chairperson and IRA Leader SIG Executive Director. He has also served IRA at the state and local level in numerous capacities including president of the El Paso Reading Council. Paul is active in Rotary, Kappa Delta Pi, and Phi Delta Kappa. He has served on numerous school district committees and as a consultant to University of Houston's Center for Academic Reading Skills. He earned his bachelor's degree from University of Texas at El Paso and his master's from New Mexico State University.



## Upcoming Plans and Events

Remember it's time to renew your TALE membership for only \$5.00! Go to our website for further details.

TALE is planning the publication of our first electronic journal this year. The call for editors is available online.

We will be offering two professional development opportunities this year:

- International Reading Association's 58th Annual Conference in San Antonio being held April 19-22. If you are interest-

ed in winning **FREE** registration visit our website for contest details.

- Second Annual TALE Literacy Summit in Round Rock October 13, 2013.



*“In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn.”*  
~Phil Collins

## Editor's Note

This issue was exciting to edit as there was an increase in member contributions. Members shared choice YA literature, a favorite website, and new ways to collaborate and develop literacy

education through technology.

It is TALE's sincerest wish that TALE members continue to contribute to our newsletter in order for topics relevant to mem-

bers stay at the forefront of this publication.

If you would like to write for the newsletter please submit your ideas/articles to Leslie Haas at [lhaas@dallas.edu](mailto:lhaas@dallas.edu).

