

# Texas Association for Literacy Education

TALE

Volume II, Issue III  
Spring 2013

## President's Message

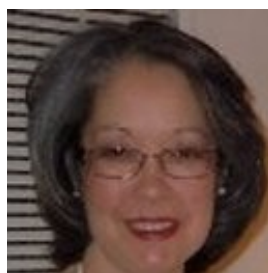
Another school year ends with many changes on the horizon for Texas educators. Whether you plan to move on or stay where you are, the Texas Association for Literacy Education wants to be there with you. Save our website to your cell phone screen for information at your fingertips on meetings, publications, and resources. Like us on Facebook to see the latest TALE news. Share your ideas by submitting articles to

our journal, *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*. And meet us and other members at our October 12 Literacy Summit, Building Momentum.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to be president of this organization this past year. As I hand over the TALE presidency to Sharon O'Neal, I am also retiring from my position in Northside ISD in San Antonio. I feel good about what I'm leaving

behind and thrilled about what lies before me in retirement, especially more time for my grandson! Happy summer break, Texas educators. I hope to see you at the Summit in October.

~Carolyn Denny



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### Special Points of Interest:

- Thanks!
- Hellos and Goodbyes
- TALE Journal
- Young adult literature
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*"Literacy arouses hopes, not only in society as a whole but also in the individual who is striving for fulfillment, happiness and personal benefit by learning how to read and write. Literacy...means far more than learning how to read and write...The aim is to transmit...knowledge and promote social participation."*

~UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, Germany

# TALE Volunteers at IRA *Thank You*



# Introducing *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*



TALE's brand new *Texas Journal for Literacy Education* needs your help for a successful launch!

Please consider participating in the success of our journal by volunteering to be a reviewer.

We are now accepting manuscripts for our first issue due on or before July 2nd.

See our website for additional details.

[www.texasreaders.org](http://www.texasreaders.org)

# Meet the Editorial Team for the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*



**Leslie Haas**

## Leslie Haas

Dr. Haas is an assistant professor at Dallas Christian College where she serves as the Education Department Chair. Her literacy education experience includes working as an elementary classroom teacher, literacy coach/instructional specialist, instructor of undergraduate literacy and methodology courses, and supervisor of pre-service teachers.

A research agenda which includes English language learners and effective instruction, cultural and economic awareness in education, technology-based literacy opportunities, and teacher education/instructional coaching has led Dr. Haas to both publish and present at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Service to the literacy community is important to Dr. Haas as seen through her current volunteer roles as Ad-Interim Co-Editor of the Association for Literacy Educators and Researchers' (ALER) Yearbook, Edi-

tor of the Texas Association for Literacy Education's (TALE) newsletter, and Treasurer/Board Member for the International Reading Association's (IRA) Special Interest Group (SIG): Language Experience Approach.

## Debra Lee

Debra Lee is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M University-Commerce. In addition to teaching undergraduate reading courses, she works with pre-service teachers and serves as a field-based program center coordinator.

She received her B.S. in Elementary Education from the University of Kansas; her M.Ed. in Reading and M.S. in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University-Commerce where she is completing her Ed.D. Prior to joining the faculty of Texas A&M University-Commerce, she enjoyed twenty-eight years in the PK-12 school setting

where she served as a classroom teacher, elementary principal, Dyslexia Program Coordinator, Literacy Coach supervisor and district level Literacy Coordinator.

Throughout her career as an instructional leader, student centered pedagogy focusing on high levels of engagement for all students undergirded her work. Primary areas of interest include critical thinking as it relates to reading comprehension, technology integration, cognitive neuroscience and brain based learning, as well as conducting research on the effect of a common language of instruction.

Debra is a member of the International Reading Association, Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, Coalition of Reading and English Supervisors of Texas, and Texas Association of Literacy Education.



**Debra Lee**

# Meet the Editorial Team for the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*

## Susan Szabo

Dr. Susan Szabo earned her B.A. at Western Michigan University, and both her M.Ed. and EdD at Oklahoma State University in reading and supervision.

Dr. Susan Szabo is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M University-Commerce. She teaches master level and doctorate level courses in reading, language arts, and social studies. She is coordinator of the C&I Doctoral Program and is a member of both the university and the department-level IRB committee.

Before entering university teaching, she worked in the public school system doing various levels of teaching. Her last assignment was as the district's adolescent reading specialist.

Her research and professional writing focuses on literacy at all levels, teacher education, technology, teacher stages, preservice and inservice teacher development, and the integration

of literacy into content areas. She has published over 60 articles in state, regional, and international publications. Susan is a member of the International Reading Association, Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, and Texas Association of Literacy Education. She is a member of numerous Editorial Boards for various education journals. She has been co-editor of the ALER Yearbook for the last 8 years.

## Sheri Vasinda

Sheri Vasinda served the public schools of Texas for over 30 years as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and literacy consultant. She now divides her time between teaching at Oklahoma State University and consulting and conducting research in Texas schools.

Her research interest includes literacy and technology integrations. Findings from her technology integration projects have

been published in several journals and books. Other research interests include digital portfolios, critical and digital literacies, issues surrounding student engagement and efficacy, and teacher action research.

She has received many teaching and service awards such as the District Teacher of the Year and Bright Idea Award, Phi Delta Kappa Distinguished Service Award, and Texas A&M University-Commerce Distinguished Alumni Award. She is a recipient of an OSU Center for Innovation and Economical Development Equipment Fund Grant, Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation Transforming Educator Grant, Texas State Reading Association Research Grant, and Best Buy Teach Award Grant.



**Susan Szabo**



**Sheri Vasinda**

# TALE Member Book Review

## *A Game for Swallows: To Die, To Leave, To Return* by Zeina Abirached



In 1981, Zeina Abirached was born during the civil war in Lebanon. The war carried on for 15 years, killing thousands of people, while others fled the country permanently. *A Game for Swallows* (Graphic Universe, 2012), an autobiographical account in graphic novel format, provides few details about the treacherous politics of the conflict. Instead, it tells a simple story of strength and family unity.

Over the course of a night in the 1980s, while Zeina's parents are visiting a relative in another part of the city of Beirut, Zeina's neighbors gather in the foyer of her family's apartment. The foyer serves as a familiar setting that represents protection and comfort. The friends tell stories, drink coffee and whiskey, and listen to the news as the war per-

sists in the background, serving as a reminder of the chaos around them. The war is present throughout the story as an unspoken, unseen beast.

The explanation of the title is offered at the end of the book. A photograph of a wall containing graffiti as Zeina and her family are leaving Lebanon. On a scarred wall outside of the apartment buildings, reads "Mourir Partir Revenir, C'est le Jeu des Hirondelles."

The words seem bold and urgent and mean "To Die, To Leave, To Return, It's a Game for Swallows."

Author-illustrator Abirached uses powerful black and white illustrations to tell her relatable story about stability in a time of danger. Edward Gauvin provides the English translation for this new edition of a book origi-

nally published in French. Targeted to young adult readers, *A Game For Swallows* is important in a time when many nations and children experience violence on a daily basis. This book forces readers to think critically about the problems we face in the world, both historically and in the present. It is a memorable read for young adults as well as adults.

~~By Leslie Cantú





## TALE Member Book Review

### *¡Juventud! Growing Up on the Border.* Edited by René Saldaña, Jr. and Erika Garza-Johnson

*¡Juventud!*, is a vivid and memorable collection about the Rio Grande Valley, released in March 2013 by VAO Publishing in Donna, Texas. This anthology of eight short stories and sixteen poems holds people as the epicenter of the writing. What brings it together is the communal love for the *cultura* of the place.

This book holds true to its title: *¡Juventud! Growing Up on the Border*. I am certain of the playful appeal it holds for young adult audiences. You just can't read through the pieces and not remember your childhood—loud, bawdy parties at *tío* Lalo's house—trying to get a peek at the naked lady down the street—sharing secrets which seem so small now, but meant the world to you back then.

Light-hearted stories, such as “Johnny Quick” (by Xavier Garza), remind the reader of grade-school competition when running faster than someone else determined the difference between freedom and shame. Heavier stories include “The Heartbeat of the Soul of the World” (by Rene Saldaña, Jr.) and “The Noise Expert” (by Jan Seale), which appeal to hearing—music and bangs and pots and notes and voices and the ceaseless murmur of humanity which lingers on long after the story is over.

And then come the stories which have love and hope and heartache and reality and passion and indifference—all very relevant to youth of today. In “A Map of Where I've Been” (by Rubén Delgado), Cirilo leads the reader through images of his family—loud *tíos* and

worried *tías* and a paranoid *abuelita* with cameras in her yard to keep an eye on the neighborhood troublemakers.

The poetry, as well, is vivid and true. Poems include “Relocating Emotions” by Guadalupe García McCall, “Do These Genes Make Me Look Fat?” by Diane Gonzales Bertrand, and “La Labor: Migrantes del Valle” by Daniel García Ordaz.

Stories, poetry, and photography weave together like a tapestry with lots of different colors. Individual parts make up the whole picture, and when you see it in its entirety, the tapestry looks beautiful.

~Ayesha Zahid



## **TALE Member Kimberly Reznicek IRA's April Member of the Month!**



**Check out our website to read her full interview!**

"Once children learn how to learn,  
nothing is going to narrow their mind.  
The essence of teaching is to make  
learning contagious, to have one idea  
spark another." ~ *Marva Collins*



## Sharon O'Neal TALE President for 2013-2014!

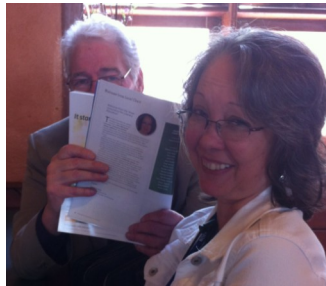


**Check out our website to read more about President O'Neal!**

"A hundred years from now, it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in the bank...but the world may be a better place because I made a difference in the life of a child." ~ *Forest Witcraft*



## **Thank You, Carolyn Denny!**



**Your service to the literacy community is an inspiration to educators across the state of Texas. TALE appreciates your time, dedication, and expertise during our extremely successful second year.**

## Upcoming Plans and Events

See our website for additional details regarding the following TALE plans and events:

- Second Annual TALE Literacy Summit in Round Rock, October 13, 2013
- Manuscripts now being accepted for the new TALE journal
- Reviewer applications now being accepted for the new TALE journal
- Membership fees now accepted online via credit card

Please visit our website for information on other literacy organizations and events.

If you have an event you would like your fellow TALE members to know more about, please contact [TALEmembership@gmail.com](mailto:TALEmembership@gmail.com)



## Editor's Note

This issue was bitter-sweet to put together, as it is my last as Newsletter Editor. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work on these last three issues, and have met some amazing people along the way.

This issue includes recognition of our many volunteers at the IRA Convention, the introduction of our new

journal and its four editors, member reviewed YA literature, a nationally recognized TALE member, and recognition of our current and future TALE presidents.

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

members stay at the forefront of this publication.

If you would like to write for the newsletter, please submit your ideas/articles to our new Newsletter Editor, Jodi Pilgrim at [jpilgrim@umhb.edu](mailto:jpilgrim@umhb.edu).

~Leslie Haas

